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BRITAIN AND THE U.S.S.R.

WITH the worst of winters beginning to thaw into a cloudy spring, Stalin celebrated Red Army Day with a speech whose quiet assurance must have been more alarming to the enemy than any fanfares. He discussed the factors that would lead to Russian victory and devoted some time to demolishing those who "engage in prattle to the effect that the Red Army's aim is to exterminate the German people and destroy the "German State." The Red Army "cannot have any such idiotic notions." Germans who occupy Soviet soil will be annihilated and in the process of liberation Hitler's "clique" is likely to disappear. But "Hitlers come and go, whereas the German people and the German State remain." The Red Army kills Germans "not because of their German origin but because they wish to enslave our motherland." The Red Army "is free from feelings of racial hatred; its doctrine is based on the concept of racial equality which gave it the advantage of friendship with oppressed people in contrast to the Nazis who oppress them. Another slander is that the Red Army does not take prisoners. On the contrary, only those who will continue to fight for Hitler and do not surrender are annihilated.

Several considerations leap to the eye in this speech. First Stalin is no romantic in war; he knows, unlike some strange propagandists in this country, the difference between strategy and tactics; he does not want to add years to the war and millions to the toll of wasted lives by threats of destruction which can only result in consolidating Germany behind Hitler in the hour of defeat as well as in the hour of victory. Stalin repudiates this ghastly nonsense; and while German Communists on the Moscow wireless now appeal to their fellow workers to cease supporting Hitler, he also takes the opportunity to reassure timorous allies in capitalist countries who fear that he entertains notions of Bolshevising Europe. Russia's frontiers must be assured, and the Baltic States, he tells us, must be freed. Russia will be pleased if the "Hitler clique" should fall, whether as the result of the failure of its attack on Russia, or by the action of the German people. But the implication was that Russia will not, after liberating her own territory, be greatly interested in destroying Hitlerism. Her purpose in this war is defensive.

Beyond that Stalin makes no promises; his speech is to be read as a skilful stroke of political warfare, not as a post-war programme. It contains a warning to the Allies; the Soviet Union still fights on the Continent without the support of an Allied army. Something is wrong with the timetable here. Britain missed the bus last summer when we failed to carry out a diversion or a series of raids such as those which Sir Roger Keyes told the House of Commons were feasible enough. Mr. Churchill's speeches suggest that we are apparently still thinking of co-operating with an American army in 1943 or 1944 instead of seizing the chance (except by way of sundry supplies) to collaborate in the supreme struggle that seems staged for the next few months in Russia. It would certainly be useless to attempt military action unless it is better prepared and led than recent British operations have been. But if we are not ready, why is that? Is it that many of our leaders, our staff officers and our civil servants, as well as our people as a whole, have failed to possess that sense of urgency, whose absence was detected by others as well as by Sir Stafford Cripps.

If there has been some decline in the country's morale, we doubt whether the fact that our own island is no longer under attack can be the whole of the explanation. More often it springs from a fatalistic sense of helplessness, as disaster follows disaster and the same temper, if not always the same people, remains at the top. Changes in the personnel of the Cabinet are hopeful if they mean that some of the policies and traditions entrenched in the Services will at last be brought under review and abandoned. The critics in this week's debate in the House reflected this new mood of hope. The news, at sea as on land, is blacker than ever before and it grows blacker yet, but the House felt what the country feels—that a Premier who can make changes so unconventional in his Cabinet, may at long last reconsider some of the obsessions that have governed policy. It is clear that a new move is coming in India, for which we shall have to thank Sir Stafford Cripps as well as Marshal Chiang Kai-shek. Whether it will, even now, be bold enough, we may know next week. Speaker after speaker in a very able debate voiced the general anxiety that is felt about the place of the Air Force in the whole framework of our operations. The longer it remains a wholly separate and independent force, the longer will it be in revising its tactical policy and programme of manufacture. Nothing could be worse for morale than the suspicion that we are all being set to manufacture the wrong types of plane and tank. That is the kind of problem with which the trained, scientific mind of Sir Stafford Cripps should be well able to cope.

The other chief cause of some decline in morale may be a consequence of the absence of any offensive spirit in our strategy. We may have been caught, in Malaya and in Burma, unready and outnumbered. It does not follow that a monotonous tactic of withdrawal was the best reply. If at some point over the world-wide battle-front, at sea, if not by land, we saw some sign of initiative, some evidence of the spirit of attack, our spirits as a nation would rise, even if the inevitable reverses continued. That consideration carries us back to our starting-point. The spectacle of Russia's energy and her display of an offensive spirit may move us all to unstinted admiration, but the contrast of our comparative inaction begets in most of us a deep sense of humiliation. The maintenance of an inactive army of over three million men, condemned to the passive defence of this island, cannot be justified through yet another spring and summer.

America's Share and Ours

Mr. Roosevelt's broadcast of Monday was mainly an answer to domestic critics, some of whom, he suggested, complain unreasonably of the inaction of the American fleet and army, while others account for it by exaggerating the damage done at Pearl Harbour. The President was, however, very chary of positive information. The best news from the industrial front is that after a struggle stretching over nearly a year the Administration, backed in this case by the C.I.O., has at last compelled the automobile industry to cut down its manufacture of civilian cars for a booming market and adapt its plant to turn out tanks, planes and army trucks. While some Americans are far from happy about their own performance in the war, others express their discontent by criticising us even more sharply than we deserve. Some concentrate, very properly, on our political failure in India and point by way of contrast to American liberality in the Philippines. Others complain, not unfairly, that our High Command is "defensive minded," and ask why we must keep three and a half million men idle in this island. Much more painful than this is the belief solidly held, even by our best friends in America, that all the fighting that has been done anywhere in this war has been done by the Australians and Indians. This belief arose first of all from the stupidity shown in editing our own military news, but Goebbels has of course done his best with it. Captain Margesson's last speech as Secretary for War should have done something to destroy this cruel legend. Of all the casualties on land in this war from first to last 70 per cent. have been British. But it is useless to say this once. Unless we use our brains to circulate it, it will not penetrate one American head in ten.

On the Defensive

Mr. Churchill's very gloomy picture will have done something to offset the almost inevitable news that Rangoon has proved indefensible. It is to be hoped that the Commander in the field will have been able to extricate his forces from Lower Burma and link up with the Chinese Army in the North. The prospect in North Africa is also disquieting. General Rommel is apparently waiting for reinforcements. If they have reached him in sufficiently large numbers the drive towards Egypt and Suez may begin before very long. But Britain has a large army in the Middle East.

Forced Labour in Kenya

The proposal to conscribe African labour in Kenya is the formal conclusion of a committee which included the Director of Manpower, the chief Labour officer, a European representative of native interests and Arch-Deacon Owen. There are to be "safeguards"; adequate wages, rations, and housing; and the Africans are to be chosen by the District Officer advised by ten tribal members. There are some 550,000 able-bodied male Africans in Kenya, of whom 268,000 are already in civilian employment and 47,000 on military work. The numbers to be raised by conscription are 22,500 for civil war production and 15,000 for military purposes. This means that 55 per cent. of the Africans will be absent from their reserves. The Belgian Government which is far from sentimental, holds that 10 per cent. is the limit of safety for absence from the reserves. But it is the principle of forced labour, "the White Man's Slavery" which is completely repugnant to British traditions; and which, in fact, no administration would dream of imposing outside a settler's colony. We are confident that the Colonial Office will refuse its sanction to this scheme.

The Women's Services

Protests by the women M.P.s have secured a greatly improved membership for the committee of inquiry into the three women's Services. It now consists of five women, including Miss Violet Markham, Mrs. Stocks, and Dr. Summerskill, and three men of whom Sir David Munro is a doctor, and Sir Frederick Sykes chairman of the Miners' Welfare Commission. The W.R.N.S. is small and has a waiting list; so has the much larger W.A.A.F.; it is the A.T.S. which is short of recruits. The unpopularity of the Services, stripped of vagueness, boils down to three causes. One cannot be cured. Women must get over their dislike of leaving their homes, living in herds, and sleeping in dormitories. Women who like uniforms (the A.T.S. uniform is hideous) and drill are few; the liking for drill of an unadult type of woman may influence the Services too much, though drill is nearly as good as games for health. The second complaint, fear of bad physical conditions, is, we are assured, unfounded. Conditions are rough, but cleanliness and health are looked after, and problems such as the monthly period and pregnancy sensibly and humanely dealt with. Health standards, on the records, are high. The third fear is that of moral danger, and it is this which has caused the Service men to extort the exemption of married women under thirty. There is no justice in exempting childless unmarried women; and this provision has caused a marriage epidemic among escapists. And the spinsters demand with fury and reason to know why they should be in less moral danger than the wedded. The safeguards against such risk are self-respect and *esprit de corps*. It may be a pity that young girls should have to keep company with the occasional immoral woman, but that possibility occurs in all kinds of work.

Home Front. *(By an Industrial Correspondent.)*

The effect of the Beveridge Report will be enormously greater than it would have been if it had been allowed to appear months ago. Beyond this, the War Office, after its prolonged cogitation, has done its damnedest to aid its accuser, by throwing cold water on any suggestion that major changes in organisation can be made during a war. If the War Office had said nothing, or had agreed promptly and without argument to examine his proposals, many readers of the Report might have supposed that the charges made in it were exaggerated; for admittedly they rest largely on a small and not wholly unbiassed sample. But the very complacency of the War Office pundits robs this defence of all its plausibility. No one who reads the report and the reply is likely to doubt that the Army is guilty of gross misuse of skilled man-power, at a time when its proper use may make all the difference between defeat and victory. A great many of us know individual instances of this misuse—I have met quite a number of them myself—but we have tried to hope that they are exceptional. Sir William Beveridge has reported only on the Army's failure to use the skilled men whom it has taken from industry in jobs corresponding to their skill. But for every skilled man thus misused, there are probably at least a dozen strong, able-bodied men being used in the Army on work which could easily be done by women or by less able-bodied men. This point is barely touched on in the Report; but it is obviously of the greatest importance; and it is to be hoped that one of the first jobs undertaken by the new War Cabinet will be to send a small mission of active and competent persons, who are *not* generals, to comb out the Army and compel it to put the man-power which it has taken from industry to proper use.

This, however, is only part of the problem. If it is obvious that Sir William Beveridge is right in insisting that men ought to be called up for the Army as a whole and then sorted out to particular units according to their capacities it is no less clear that the Army ought to have mechanical units properly equipped to undertake all manner of skilled engineering tasks. One of the most signal triumphs of the Germans both in Russia and in North Africa has been their extraordinary rapidity in repairing damaged tanks and other mechanical equipment. This is due to the fact that they do use their skilled men as skilled men, and recognise fully the need for having skilled repair units attached to every mechanised fighting force. The War Office replies, when it is urged that this ought to be done in the British Army, that it is very difficult to institute such a system in time of war. It will be much more difficult to institute it when, for lack of it, we have let the Nazis defeat us. Of course, this stubborn refusal to face the necessities of modern, mechanised warfare is perfectly understandable. It arises from the snob tradition that it is more important to have "proper" waiters in the officers' mess, and plenty of batmen, than to create an army capable of dealing with modern mechanised equipment. The sense of frustration among men serving in the Army is very keen. This is sometimes attributed to the fact that so much of it is kept at home after training with nothing to do. It is at least as much due to the fact that from the High Command to a large proportion of the subalterns, the Army is still "playing at soldiers" in a world at war.

* * *

This leads us to certain reflections about the new Ministry of Production and the man-power problem as a whole. Mr. Lyttelton is now, apparently, to be our Minister of Production in place of Lord Beaverbrook; and there is a suggestion that he may be given wider powers than were suggested in the White Paper issued in connection with Lord Beaverbrook's short-lived appointment. Hephæstus Smith, in a pamphlet published by the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION a fortnight ago, stressed the point that any real Ministry of Production must be given control over labour supply for war industry as well as over the other factors of production, and urged that the Ministry of Labour and National Service ought to be split—one section passing under the authority of the Minister of Production, and the other, the "National Service" section, running under the authority of a strong Minister experienced to deal with the allocation of man-power between industry and the armed forces. It is now clear that this National Service Ministry ought to be given a wide authority to ensure that the men whom the armed forces are allowed to abstract from industry are rightly used, and that the armed forces are not allowed to immobilise large numbers of skilled and able-bodied men without rendering a proper account of the uses to which they are being put. It is true that Sir William Beveridge's strictures apply mostly to the Army, and that he appears to exonerate the Navy, which has a tradition of using mechanical skill, and to pass lightly over the Air Force. But it must be observed that Sir William Beveridge's study of conditions in the R.A.F. seems to have been perfunctory in comparison with his scrutiny of conditions in the other two services.

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AN INDEPENDENT INDIA

SOMETHING that must, for good or evil, decide our future and that of Asia, happened last week in Delhi, when Marshal Chiang Kai-shek addressed his final appeal to us and to the Indians. Though Chinese civilisation is much more careful of the courtesies and decorums of life than our own, he bluntly asked us to concede to the Indians "real political power." It is probable that in confidence behind the scenes the same advice has come from the other ally more deeply concerned in the struggle against Japanese Imperialism. The Americans realise as clearly as the Chinese the need for the whole-hearted participation of a free Indian nation if this struggle is to be won. If we continue to tie one of our arms behind our back, at the best it will be long and doubtful. Something, we do not doubt, Mr. Churchill is now willing to concede, but the usual risk confronts us that he will yield too little and too late. This problem cannot be solved if his traditional England supposes that at the end of this war, with the aid of the Chinese, Americans and Dutch, it is going to recover its traditional Empire, in which everything will go on as before. That traditional Empire had two pillars—firstly our sea power, and secondly our monopoly among these Asiatic peoples of modern mechanical techniques in industry and war. Sea power in isolation is to-day less decisive than we liked to think it, and Asiatics can overtake us and pass us in modern technology. Our reverses in Malaya and Burma mean not merely that on the spot we were ill-prepared and ill-led: they mean that by our own faults of racial arrogance and aloofness our leadership over these peoples has passed from us. We may, if we have the grace to mend our ways, become in the future their allies, friends and helpers, but only on condition that we abandon our traditional claim to rule over them. When, after a hard and prolonged struggle, Japan is beaten, two great Asiatic Powers will hold the future of this part of the world in their hands. One of them will be China, which has already welded her national unity during her four years' struggle for survival. The other will be India, if we permit her to come to life. Round them inevitably the weaker Asiatic peoples, from Persia to Indo-China, will group themselves. Australia, meanwhile, may have learned that her ties with the United States are at least as vital to her as her links with London. An organised world order must come into being, but will it necessarily follow the old pattern of Empire and Commonwealth?

This preface leads us to the uncomfortable conclusion that Dominion Status may be a less obviously appropriate solution than the progressive half of the British people believes it to be. A quarter of a century ago, when we first spoke of it as "the goal," Indians were ready to welcome it. But we hedged and delayed, until the very words became for their minds an irritant and a symbol of insincerity. Since 1929, Congress has demanded "independence" and the Muslim League, as its competitor, has been obliged to use the same word. The Dominion idea is popular among ourselves because it belongs to our historical ideology and permits us to concede the substance of independence without injury to our pride. But to Indians its associations are inappropriate and uncongenial. As Mr. Nehru reminded us recently, "India is not an offshoot or colony of another nation." The solution that suited Australians and New Zealanders so perfectly cannot naturally be applied to India. The analogy breaks down: she is not our daughter who has settled overseas. On the contrary, as Mr. Nehru puts it, "India is a great nation and a mother country which has influenced great civilisations and vast sections of the human race in Asia." Apart from any question of pride, there are more realistic considerations that may weigh with her. The Dominions, politically independent though they may be, are in trade, finance and defence mainly concerned with the Brtiish market, the City and Whitehall. That was true of India in the past, but hardly by her own choice. In the future Indians, to quote Mr. Nehru again, though they will wish "to live in peace and friendship with all the nations of the world," will be "inevitably drawn to their neighbours, with whom they have had thousands of years of cultural contact, China, Burma . . . Iran." Here again, the Dominion idea would be no help in working out cultural, economic and political collaboration between these neighbours, and might well be a hindrance. By whatever transitional stages it may be reached, what we have to envisage is, then, an effectively independent India, free to move by her own will in her Asiatic environment.

What is offered to-day can be and should be a temporary solution, subject to future negotiation when peace brings leisure to think and construct. By what tests will Indians judge it? Firstly, they may ask that the India Office shall disappear: it is the symbol of their dependent status. Then should they be placed under Mr. Attlee at the Dominions Office? That is not a happy suggestion, firstly and chiefly because it implies this dubious Dominion solution, and secondly because Mr. Attlee is associated in their memories chiefly with the unhappy episode of the Simon Commission. If any change is made at Whitehall, it would be better to make what remains of the India Office a department of the Foreign Office under Mr. Eden. But it is generally realised that everything will turn on our willingness to give India at once a genuine National Government to lead her people in its struggle against the Axis for its own freedom. Indians will rightly refuse to be impressed by the admission of some gentlemen with brown skins to the Viceroy's Council, so long as we keep in our own official hands the portfolios of Defence, Finance and Home Affairs (i.e. police). When these departments, the real keys to power, are run by Indians who truly represent the nation, India will be in effect self-governing. Our own wish would be that Mr. Nehru, a dynamic and militant personality, would take the Ministry of Defence. He has it in him to unite and organise his people, to fight and work as only a free nation can. But in that case a Non-Congress Muslim should be the Premier—such a man perhaps as Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan. We would also draw attention to the suggestion made by Mr. Edward Thompson in a letter in our columns last week that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru should be Viceroy. But it is not for us to nominate India's leaders. If we intend to enlist her in the battle for her own freedom, we must leave it to her own people to choose their governors. We need hardly add that the ranks of the army must be opened wide to the whole nation, and no longer reserved for our select "martial races." Why should not a Home Guard be created on plans which a man with the experience and outlook of Major Wintringham might draw up?

At this point the difficulty made by the attitude of Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League may seem to stand in the way. We doubt whether the main body of Muslims would follow Mr. Jinnah in obstructing a genuine offer of national independence. In the past all our offers were qualified by reservations which in effect enabled and even invited the minorities to put their veto on any advance. What Indians chiefly mean by "independence" is, that we should cease to play this traditional game of divide to rule. When once we reach the point of surrendering what Marshal Chiang calls "real political power," the Muslim minority will adjust itself to the inevitable. The feud is a painful fact, but we have made it the central reality of Indian life by our well-meant efforts to separate the warring creeds. At the centre, when a federal India governs herself, the views men take about tariffs, railway communications and the technicalities of defence will not depend on whether they derive their faith in the supernatural from the Koran or the Vedic Hymns. Taxes strike Hindus and Muslims much as the rain falls, on the just and the unjust impartially. The real divisions in this modern world must increasingly follow lines not of creed but of economic function.

To sum up, we are facing a wholly new and unforeseen situation. Can the Chinese and Indian peoples together, with the technical aid of the Americans and ourselves, cope with the military power of Japan and the Axis? On that, in the East, rests the hope of victory. The political problem is then to mobilise them both, as an allied Asiatic group, in such a way as to draw from their full contribution to the common effort. The old controversies over the constitution have become trivial and irrelevant and the Dominion idea may not now offer the best line of approach. We are in a crisis in which we cannot consider our own preferences. The details should as far as possible be postponed until after the armistice. This can be done provided we concede the reality of power to-day, and the certainty with our good will of independence to-morrow.

A LONDON DIARY

A SMALL War Cabinet; Sir Stafford Cripps to lead the House; Margesson and Moore-Brabazon out of office; a hard-headed and blasphemous public servant to run and, one hopes, purge the War Office; an able and reputedly unconventional business man to manage war production. These changes please almost everyone. But about Cripps I notice an ominous absence of warmth in some newspapers, which reminds one that Sir Stafford has no party or organisation behind him. Note, too, that he has been given a job which will presumably involve answering criticisms of mistakes made while Cripps himself was in Russia. Amongst the other appointments, Attlee, who is a thoroughly efficient member of a team, rightly remains in the War Cabinet and takes over the Dominions Office, which, like the Foreign Office in wartime, is important, but not, in a routine way, onerous. Dalton seems cut out for success at the Board of Trade. Strangest of appointments is Lord Wolmer to be Minister of Economic Warfare; strange and distressing, if that office, not otherwise very important, continues to make its holder one of the trinity that controls political warfare. Lord Wolmer, you will recall, once wanted to surrender the Post Office to private enterprise. He was chidden (or chid) by Mr. Baldwin, who suggested that he was still in his youth and might learn more wisdom as he grew older. I hope he has; he has the reputation for being the sort of Tory who regards Mr. Eden as a dangerous radical.

* * *

The most arresting appointment is that of Sir James Grigg. "The rudest man in London"—so his friends say. Now rudeness may well be needed at the War Office, but if it was in itself a sufficient remedy I suppose it would

have served to cleanse that Augean Stable during the years in which Sir James has been Permanent Under Secretary. Will it make all the difference now that he has the right also to be rude to Lord Croft and Sir Edward Grigg, who until this week ranked as his superiors? No, my hopes of Sir James rest on other qualities. He hates inefficiency and perhaps understands that it is the contents of a head that matters, not the brass hat on the top of it. You can be rude without sacking anyone;—I hope Sir James can sack as well as be rude. Maybe he also understands the Army. He played a worthy part, I believe, in securing the improvement in Army education. He knows, I think, that morale has little to do with courage, and everything with leadership and hope for the future. Perhaps he knows that an army of the best material in the world will rot if it remains inactive, and is only spasmodically subjected to defeats by an enemy incomparably better led than itself. Perhaps we can also convince Sir James that a universal concurrence in the view that it is necessary to beat the Germans is not the equivalent of that spirit of which Cromwell spoke when he said that his army knew that for which it fought and loved that which it knew.

* * *

One of the oddities of the Government changes is the abolition of Mr. Greenwood, Lord Reith, and their departments, without any provision as yet for post-war planning or reconstruction. Lord Portal is put in charge of building; everyone agrees that he is, ethically speaking, a good man. He belongs to the family which was given the monopoly of printing bank notes back in the eighteenth century. In charge of derelict areas he tended, as the ethically good do tend, to treat such problems as matters of "relief." I doubt if he ever thought that unemployment demanded any change in the structure of industry or society. He has been in charge of raw materials. That he should move from rubber does not surprise me; that he should be put in charge of building does.

* * *

Mr. Churchill gave an interesting account of his relations with the General Staff. He contradicted those who have believed that he attempted personally to run the strategy of the war, and those who have imagined that there is no regularly sitting and combined joint command. The Chiefs of Staffs, he says, meet continuously, he is represented at their meetings by General Ismay. The question one would like answered is whether the presence of the Prime Minister's representative, who knows the Prime Minister's general views, may not at critical moments have the effect of leading the Chiefs of Staff to accommodate their expert views to what they know to be the Prime Minister's political decisions. In such circumstances a strong Staff will send its own minutes to the War Cabinet, which must accept it or turn it down. If it is not composed of strong men they will substitute compromises which they have reason to think will be more acceptable to the supreme authority.

* * *

A friend sends me a disquieting story from an R.A.F. Training Unit. "We have always understood," he writes, "that while airmen are obliged to go to church parade, they cannot be compelled to enter the church building. Last Sunday, however, an airman refused to enter church, with the result that he was awarded by order of the C.O twenty-eight days' detention, which the padre subsequently got reduced to fourteen." Incredulously I wrote to my friend to inquire if the facts were really as stated, and, if they were, for further particulars. He assured me that they were precisely as stated, and gave names. The case then would seem to stand as follows: We can still compel men to pretend to worship a God in whom they do not believe, in order that they may obtain His blessing upon their efforts to increase their efficiency in the art of killing their fellow human beings whom, incidentally, He is supposed to have made.

* * *

It is historic logic, and not coincidence, which makes this phase of the war coincide with the publication of the Labour Party's Interim Report on Reconstruction. It is more than probable that this document will do more than anything so far published in the war to give coherence and direction to the vague, but eager, progressivism which is the nation's predominant mood. For the next three months it will be discussed in every local party and trade union branch in Great Britain. Upon the acceptance of its principles the party's conference at Whit-week will turn. It will then become the test of whether the Parliamentary Party really grasps the nature of this war, and thus marks itself out as the body to shape the post-war world, or whether it is to be by-passed by history as the last war by-passed the Liberal Party. The immediate test is India. But beyond India is the question, not less urgent, of whether we understand the implications of a planned society.

L'INTERNATIONALE BRITANNIQUE

Sir Granville Bantock has written a new arrangement of the music and his wife a new version of the words [of the Internationale] . . .

The official version begins: "Arise ye starvelings from your slumbers, Arise ye criminals of want." Lady Bantock's translation opens: "Awake, O sleepers, from your dreaming, uplift, uplift, your longing eyes."

It isn't meant to be a new Russian national anthem, said Sir Granville. Just another version English people could sing without compunction.

—Report in *Daily Herald*.

Arise! Arise! all ye united nations!
Arise! in Britain's battle, fight!
Now high and low are at their stations,
And upward look! the sky is bright!
A common cause is your possession,
You share a common enterprise.
Arise! ye victims of oppression!
As soon as possible, arise!

Freedom's birthright none should barter!
Lift up your hearts at Britain's lead!
We give in the Atlantic Charter
To each according to his need,
To persons of all ranks and classes,
To employer and to employee,
Then rise, ye proletarian masses,
And mass behind the sign of V!

Chinese, Americans, and others,
In Britain's fight their part may bear,
Aliens henceforth may be our brothers,
As we a nobler age prepare.
So rise for British institutions
And strike the iron while it's warm!
There is no call for revolutions
While Britain stands for world reform!

Then nations, come rally!
The last fight you may face,
And internationally
Preserve the British race!

SAGITTARIUS

WHAT CAN HE DO?

Dr. Temple goes to Canterbury as a reformer. His appointment to the Primacy is as significant as Sir Stafford Cripps's appointment to the War Cabinet. In his recently published Penguin Special, he claims to stand in the succession to Maurice and Kingsley and to Westcott, Gore and Scott Holand. He has set out the social wrongs crying aloud for redress, and he has suggested the radical changes that are immediately demanded. But the Archbishop is a Church reformer before he is a social reformer. He is convinced that the Church must put its own house in order before it can exercise any effective influence in the reshaping of society. That conviction is expressed in one of the Malvern Conference Findings.

> There is urgent need that the Church of England should radically reorganise its own economic and administrative system, and so reconstruct this as to make it an expression of unity of purpose and especially of brotherhood in the ministry. Until it does this, its testimony to the world will be blunted. Our sincerity in putting forward our other proposals will be judged, and rightly judged, by the energy with which we take this task in hand.

I need not stress here the scandalous inequalities of the economic system. They have been denounced for a generation and they remain unaltered. Commissions have reported and nothing has been done. It is admitted that many of both the beneficed and unbeneficed clergy are underpaid, and it is clear that they can only receive adequate stipends if the Church's resources are pooled and the incomes of the higher dignitaries are radically reduced. That would mean interference with the "rights of property" and the parson will in many instances fight to maintain his "parson's freehold." But Malvern gave another clear lead and it is not to be ignored that twenty-three bishops subscribed to its findings It declared:

> It is a traditional doctrine of Christendom that property is necessary to fullness of personal life; all citizens should be enabled to hold such property as contributes to moral independence and spiritual freedom without impairing that of others; but where the rights of property conflict with the establishment of social justice or the general social welfare, those rights should be over-ridden, modified, or, if need be, abolished.

There is no question that social justice and the general welfare of the Church demand a redistribution of its gross income, and if a bill to bring this about were introduced into Parliament by Dr. Temple it would almost certainly be passed, despite the opposition of certain bishops and cathedral chapters of the incumbents (there are not many of them), who are now paid £1,500 a year for the cure of three or four hundred souls, and, of course, of Lord Quickswood.

But legislation would not solve the economic problem. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners receive part of their immense income from mining royalties, and, what is worse, indirectly from slum properties. Groups of priests with consciences have publicly expressed their horror at the devil's money being taken to finance the work of the Lord, and the denunciation of the horrors of the slums obviously has comparatively little weight if it comes from men who, though only partially and indirectly, benefit from slum rents.

Renunciation is necessary if the Malvern call for economic and industrial reconstruction is to be accepted as a serious expression of Christian opinion. It would be no trivial matter with the certainty of a steady fall in voluntary contribu-

ions from the laity, but I believe that, if it were proposed by the Archbishop, it would be welcomed by a considerable portion of the clergy.

The welcome would be the readier if the Archbishop implemented another of the Malvern proposals which means sacrifice from the laity. This was the suggestion of a Third Order " which would enable men and women to live under a definite discipline and rule while following the ordinary profession of life." The business of this Third Order would be to quicken the Christian social conscience and to organise Christian support for what Dr. Temple has himself called the Christian revolution. Again I am convinced that, with his leadership, the Third Order would at once attract a large adherence. I say this because of the number of Malvern Groups that have come into existence during the past year. It is significant that these groups have attracted Free Church people and Roman Catholics as well as members of the Church of England.

It is indeed in the common eagerness that this bad world shall be made better that Christian unity is being reached, and it will assuredly be hastened by Dr. Temple. He is a definite Churchman with a deep regard for the Catholic heritage of the English Church, but he is definitely *persona grata* with the Nonconformists, and where he leads a great many of them will follow.

The administrative reforms in the Church of England, that Malvern asserted are necessary, are not easy to envisage. The canonical government of the Church belongs to the Convocations of Canterbury and York, each with a House of Bishops and a House of Clergy. The Houses of Clergy consist of *ex-officio* members and elected proctors. As the poorer clergy cannot afford two or three visits a year to London or York, the ordinary incumbents are under-represented and the unbeneficed are not represented at all.

The Church Assembly, brought into being by the Life and Liberty Movement, of which Dr. Temple was the leader in the 'twenties, has no jurisdiction in matters of doctrine and order, but is concerned with the more mundane administration. It consists of three Houses, the bishops and clergy of the two provinces, with an elected House of Laity which, again necessarily, is made up of the leisured and well-to-do. I confess that I have not a notion how the Church could have really representative government, and for the moment that does not matter very much. The Assembly has sometimes been useful and sometimes short-sighted and reactionary. Under Dr. Temple's guidance its usefulness may be considerably increased.

It will be one of his insistent preoccupations to bring a far larger part of the nation within the Church. Two things are immediately necessary. The services are remote from the common life and need modernising, and largely because of the failure of the theological colleges the clergy are too often ill-equipped and ill-disciplined. There is another big job of work here for the new Primate.

What he can do is by no means confined to things ecclesiastical. He is pledged to real education, and where necessary adequate meals for all children, with vocational training to the age of 18, and he has set out a plan for housing more thorough than anything likely to have occurred to Lord Reith. Both these good things could be forwarded from his place in the House of Lords.

His larger vision of economic security, genuine freedom, land reform and the limitation of profits for the benefit of the workers may not yet be practical politics, but it is to be remembered that the Fisher Education Act was passed during the last war.

Dr. Temple takes his place with the successors of St. Augustine with one big asset. The people both in and outside the Church are sure that he will be the right man in the right place. He will justify that confidence. SIDNEY DARK

ROADS TO CHINA

CHINA as a member of the United Nations is dawning upon the British mind. It is still doubtful if we realise how leading a member she is, although General Chiang Kai-shek's visit to India has captured popular imagination. The fact is that during this phase of the war all the Pacific Powers must depend largely upon China for resistance to Japan. She discovered for herself, and has practised since 1937, defence in depth, the only possible strategy for a belligerent inferior to its adversary in mechanical power. She holds nearly a million Japanese troops engaged in the towns and communication lines they occupy; they dare not quit them, since Chinese guerilla armies operate all over the country, even up to the neighbourhood of Shanghai and Canton. At Chang-sha she has scored the only serious success against Japan since Tokio declared war on the Allies. This was the fourth attempt to seize that point, and the Japanese used 100,000 men and many tanks and planes in the attack. Since China holds Chang-sha, the rich rice-exporting province of Hunan remains hers, a matter important from the strategic, economic, and psychological point of view.

China produces her own rifles, machine guns and trench mortars. She cannot make tanks or planes, big guns or lorries. She needs petrol, rubber and other materials of war as well as machinery; she exports minerals, including tin and tungsten. Since the sea coast is entirely commanded by Japan, the land routes into China are vital. Her connections with the South and West are with Burma and India.

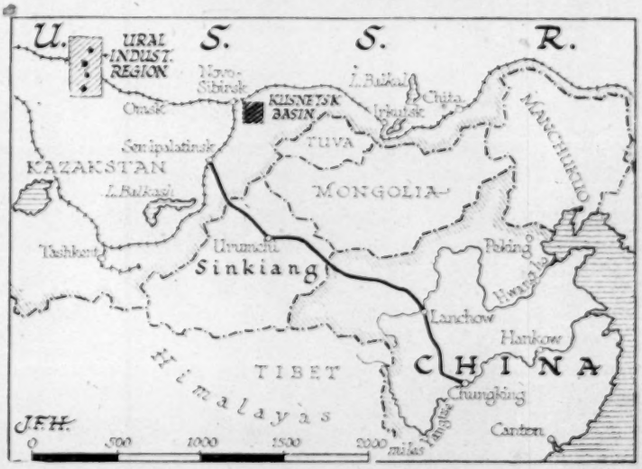
Rangoon, it now seems probable, will be separated from Lashio on the Burma road, to which it has been the sole entrance from the sea. The first stage of transit, by rail, will in that case no longer be available. There may be heavy stocks of material accumulated at the northern end of the line which can be taken to China by the road, even if the railway is in Japanese hands. Once these putative stocks are exhausted, however, the Burma road will become not a supply route, but a gate to be defended.

A second road, farther West, running through the high mountains of Sikang, and thence down the Thibetan border to Assam, is under construction. We doubt if more than a third of it is completed. It traverses High Asia; unmapped ranges of from 6,000 to 18,000 feet. It will be a terrific engineering feat, and even if mass labour were put on it such as miraculously made the Burma road in seven months, it is a longer and more difficult route. All the more reason why India and China should consider its construction as a matter of the utmost urgency.

The third land route to China is the Sinkiang or North-West Road. This leads from Chungking, the headquarters of the Free China Government, to Lanchow on the Wall; for this stretch of 500 miles it is a motor road. Thereafter for 1,500 miles it is the ancient caravan-track skirting the northern edge of the High Asian mountain masses; it runs by Urumchi in Sinkiang to the Soviet Republic of Kazakstan. The nearest railhead is Sergiopol on the Turkestan loop of the Trans-Siberian. There is an air-route also from Alma Ata on the Turkestan railway to Lanchow. This road has several disadvantages: it is an immensely long pull; at least half of each lorry-load has to be petrol, and as it edges the Gobi it is subject to dust-storms. Like the Assam route, it would need mass labour, very difficult to organise and feed in desert country, to turn it into a motor high-road. At present the traffic is mainly by camel and horse transport, organised in stages. None the less, the imports by this road were estimated by the *Times* Chungking correspondent at 20,000 tons of lorry-carried cargo in 1939. It decreased after the invasion of Russia, and is said recently to have picked up somewhat.

The North-West Road is doubly important. China exports by it tea, tin and tungsten needed by Russia. She imports material of war, for the connection with the Trans-Siberian taps the Ural industrial region and the Kuznetsk Basin. Russian manufactures in Siberia include most military needs. The Red Banner Army of the Far East has its own defence industry—machine tools and heavy machinery at Khabarovsk, Komsomolsk and Vladivostok, carriage and wagon works at Biro Bidjan, automobile works at Omsk and aircraft works at Irkutsk. The Soviet Union's third industrial region, at the cross-roads of Mongolian Yakutia and the Far East, supplies synthetic rubber, chemicals, coal from Cheremkhovo and aluminium from the lower reaches of the river Angara.

The Sinkiang road is protected in the south by the mountains, in the North by Outer Mongolia, absorbed by the Soviet Union in 1924. Sinkiang province itself has been since 1934 largely a Soviet sphere of influence. The Lanchow junction lies in the plain of the Yellow River, whose coastal provinces are in Japanese occupation; it is this part which is strategically vulnerable, along the caravan route by Sian to Peking. Similarly, the Far-Eastern province of the U.S.S.R. is open to attack from Manchukuo, supposing Russia to become a belligerent in the Pacific war. Meantime, however, the capacity of the Soviet Union to supply China is an essential factor in the struggle. General Chiang Kai-shek is a military realist. He certainly reckons on the increased value of the Sinkiang route which the closing of the Burma road would entail, following as it has done, the loss of the Yunnan-Indo-China railway. Of the many reasons which impose unity in Free China, and compromise between the conservative wing, headed by the Generalissimo, and the Communists, this matter of communications and supply is the most imperative.



FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

[The first article of this series by Sir Daniel Hall appeared on February 14. A third and concluding article follows.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

CAN British farming pay its way? It has been patent to everyone that farming has been passing through a series of depressions from the first great impact of cheap wheat and meat from overseas towards the end of the seventies of last century, down to the slump in prices in 1921, renewed in 1931 and in evidence again in 1937. These difficulties were not confined to agriculture nor to this country; they were world wide movements that affected all primary commodities, and were initiated by factors outside the domain of agricultural production itself. But our agriculture, unlike the other industries, proved inelastic to modify its structure to meet the new conditions. Instead, from 1933 onwards, defeat has been accepted and an era of reliefs has been established, of grants in aid directed immediately to the farmers but indirectly also to the benefit of landlords and workers. The amount of assistance from the general taxpayer and consumer has been variously estimated, but by 1938 amounted to something between 30 and 50 millions a year. The disturbing feature about these reliefs is that they have not been accompanied by any plan for the reform of the industry; no corresponding obligations have been laid upon farmers or landlords to alter their methods, indeed in many cases the grants have simply enabled farmers to continue in business under an obsolescent system of farming.

British farming is mainly conducted on a rental system. Though the events of the last thirty years have caused a considerable break up of the old landed estates, only from 25 to 30 per cent. of the holdings are owned by the occupiers. Farming opinion still is in favour of tenancy, which leaves the landlord to supply the permanent capital embarked in the land, while the occupiers have all their resources available for their business. Though the history of the landed system shows through the centuries a continual trend from peasant proprietorship towards larger units of a capitalist character which employ labour for wages, the process of conversion has never been complete and the general retail structure of the industry is still manifest. The changes were brought about by economic pressure; the putting together of the larger farms from the seventeenth century onwards was a response to the demands for food from the increasing industrial population. But in 1938 of a total of 327,000 holdings of above 5 acres each only 55,000 extended to 150 acres or more, whilst 196,000 belonged to the class of small holdings of less than 50 acres. A successful farmer may enlarge his business by taking more farms. These are generally scattered and continue to be reported in the statistics and often to be farmed as independent units. Rarely can a farm expand as a factory can add an annexe. The statistical records contain no evidence of the men who are controlling several thousand acres.

British farming is a matter of small businesses; if we assume that all the holdings under 50 acres are family affairs and hire no labour the remaining farms can only employ an average of 3½ men each. This retail structure again involves a simple organisation of labour: as a rule the farmer will only delegate any authority to a bailiff or foreman of the labourer class, paid only a few shillings a week above the standard wage of the "men." There is thus a marked gap between farmers and their workmen; enquiries into the origins of farmers showed that few had risen from the ranks. In Essex, for example, about twenty per cent. of the occupiers of farms of less than a hundred acres but only about three per cent. of the occupiers of larger holdings had originally been farm workers. It is difficult for a man without capital to become a farmer, but since farming is a very individual business there are many examples of men who have risen from very small beginnings.

Just as there is little organisation on the farms there is little also among farmers. The National Farmers Unions, which represent very worthily the larger farmers, are mainly political and trade protection agencies; what business organisations there are have mostly grown up in response to the recent Marketing Acts and as yet effect only the production of milk, pigs, potatoes and hops.

While there is thus a very considerable hereditary element in the entry into farming there has yet always been some influx of young men possessed of capital but no previous connection with the land. The desire to farm is still strong in the English stock, indeed the records of the Agricultural Colleges and Farm Institutes show how many young men will get themselves trained for the land but have to seek appointments at home or overseas instead of farming on their own account.

This very generalised survey of the structure of British land and of its occupiers fails, however, to give any idea of the very diversified character of its agriculture. It is not merely a matter of small men and bigger men or even of intensive and low-grade production; besides the mixed farmers there are stock raisers and crop producers, specialists in poultry, vegetables and fruit. Capitalisation ranges from the normal £8–12 an acre up to £100 an acre, and though the average output is only about £7 an acre it may rise to upwards of £100 an acre with the specialists. This diversity of methods is paralleled by an equal diversity of performance. Good and bad farming march side by side when no consideration of soil or situation call for such diversity in results. Of recent years a survey of the financial results of farming has been in progress by the Advisory Economists attached to the Agricultural Colleges. The sample is relatively small but it is sufficient to demonstrate that poor results may be due not only to inefficiency in the farmer, but to defects in the lay-out of the farm or the purpose to which it is put. For two strictly comparable groups of Yorkshire farms the net income in 1938-39 averaged £3 15s. 0d. per acre for the best group, but fell to zero in the worst group. Yet the average income of both groups, good and bad together, had risen in 1940-41 to £7 13s. 0d. per acre, so well had the farmers responded to the call for increased production in wartime.

The survey has only confirmed the opinions of observers of recent years that however indifferent was the farming of certain districts there were always to be found men in it who were conducting a successful business by intelligent and determined farming. Examples of progressive farmers are known in all parts of the country and in all branches of the industry; they have not despaired of farming and the bounties and subsidies that come their way are money for nothing. If these men are working demonstrations that farming in Great Britain need not be a spoon-fed industry, why are they the exceptions and not the rule? The answer is twofold; in the first place the fabric of farming, the land itself with its equipment, has been allowed to deteriorate during the last half-century, for with the uncertain status of farming and a growing distrust of its profitability the owners of land have not been providing those capital renewals which every progressive business requires. Landlords have ceased to be entrepreneurs; while they have continued to draw their incomes, perhaps falling incomes, from the land, they have not considered how to develop their estates or to adapt them to changed conditions. In round figures between 1891 and 1938 the cultivated area diminished by 3.1 million acres. Urban and other non-agricultural requirements took 0.6 million acres. But the deterioration in productivity is to be seen in the shrinkage of the arable area by 3.8 million acres, of which only 0.7 went to permanent grass but 2½ millions fell out of cultivation and became "rough grazings." Neglect of drainage, abandoned land, low-grade farming, were in evidence all over the country in the years before the war, to an extent that has only been fully demonstrated in the last two years since the War Agricultural Committees have had a free hand to deal with derelict land and bad farming.

Yet the need for the reform of the land is far from being covered by the operations of the War Agricultural Committees. The lay-out of British land requires to be refashioned in order to meet the requirements of power farming and the possibilities of production that science has revealed. The typical English farm (nearly 80 per cent. of them are under 150 acres), has ceased to be a profit-earning proposition save in exceptional circumstances or with exceptional men. Its overheads are too large, it cannot earn the income its occupier expects. It cannot carry the machines that alone will render cultivation profitable, its fields are too small, its boundaries too restrictive for economic working or for the larger works of drainage and reconditioning. It is the competition that comes from the land where the recent advances of science and engineering are being utilised that has caused the recurring depressions and decay of farming, and until our land is reshaped to adapt itself to these resources of production the downward movement will only increase. It is not that all the land needs to be regrouped into larger units, but that much of it can only become profitable again if so dealt with.

These have become the major problems of British farming—how to secure the replanning and reconditioning of the land and the improvement of its personnel.

A. DANIEL HALL

THIS ENGLAND

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JAP SUCCESS HITS BATH

FEWER GOLF BALLS FOR APPROACH COURSE

—Headlines in
Bath Weekly Chronicle & Herald

Now that the fighting in Malaya has ended, military opinion here is that the Japanese have shown skill in their operations.—*Daily Telegraph*.

Permission to marry a coloured musician now with the Army was granted by the Tottenham (London) magistrates yesterday.
The magistrates said they must not allow colour to influence them against the marriage, as the man was in the Army.—*Leicester Evening Mail*.

RELEASE OF VILLAINS

AMONG the changes in the world situation announced during the week is the permission given to Hollywood to show Japanese villains on the screen. "Japanese characters," we are told, "were always [hitherto] vague. Now script writers can ascribe to the Japanese any sort of villainy they like."

That is good news—at least, fairly good news. During the present century far too many concessions have been made to the sensitiveness of foreigners who objected to seeing a member of their race portrayed as a villain. Foreigners, indeed, began to protest against anything that represented them as the wicked or ludicrous figures our grandfathers believed them to be; and we, too, appeasingly gave in to them. I myself grew up in the belief that the vast majority of foreigners were potential villains or comic characters; but I have found very little of this theory supported in modern plays or films. The Savoy Theatre was even forbidden to revive *The Mikado* some years ago lest a comic representation of the Emperor should give offence to Japanese feelings.

I have changed my opinion of foreigners to some extent since childhood, but even so I am convinced that among them—whatever their race—are a number of imperfect human beings, either horrible or laughable, and that we should not be prohibited from seeing these on the stage or screen. In the days of the Russian Tsars we had some good melodramas about Tsarist tyranny, and Cossacks were as magnificently hateful as Chicago gangsters have become in more recent years. I do not think the Tsars even protested. Nobody troubled much in those days about what was thought about his countrymen in alien theatres. You could indict Russia or laugh at Japan without disturbing the calm of international relations. Even the French, most sensitive of peoples, made no formal protest against the typical Frenchman of English musical comedy who spoke of jealousy as "the green-eyed lobster," and in fact talked and behaved after the silly fashion of what was then thought to be a typical Frenchman.

In the twentieth century, unfortunately, propaganda became more and more important—at least, it came to be taken more and more seriously—as a means of furthering national reputation; and Foreign Offices began to watch even the theatres and cinemas in other countries in search of something that might lower the national prestige in the eyes of the world. As a result, there were countries which did not dare to permit an anti-Gestapo film for fear of offending Germany; and so great a nation as the United States of America felt that it was discreet to conceal from cinemagoers the fact that villains were to be found in Japan as well as in Chicago. The foreign villain, it must be admitted, did not entirely disappear from the theatre; but villainy among foreigners became increasingly restricted to men of Latin blood, like the admirable scoundrels in *On the Spot* and *Ten Minutes Alibi*.

There is, of course, no need to go abroad for villains. Any writer, even if he is an Eskimo, must be able to find plenty of material for melodrama at home. Shakespeare's blackest villain is, perhaps, Richard III, who was English of the English. Even Shakespeare, however, with all his inventiveness, liked occasionally to look for his bad characters in foreign parts. Shylock and Iago seem doubly sinister because of their alien blood. It may be that to the English of the time Macbeth's incredible breach of the duties of hospitality seemed the more sinister because he was a Scotsman. "Macbeth" is, to my mind, a gross libel on the Scottish nation, but no Scotsman seems to have noticed this at the time of its production. Men were not so sensitive in those days to what foreigners thought of them.

In our own times we have had examples of nations protesting even against plays written by their own dramatists with a native villain as the central character. When Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* was first produced, there were nightly riots in the Abbey Theatre because Christie Mahon was supposed to have killed his father, or rather—to be fair—because the people who believed that he had killed his father regarded him as a hero. The chief objection taken to the play was that it represented Ireland to the world as a country in which parricide was regarded as praiseworthy; and there is no doubt that the play might easily be taken as supporting a common English misconception about the typical Irish attitude to the sanctity of human life. Many years ago I heard a young Irishman declaiming passionately: "Shootin' landlords isn't murder"; but that did not mean that he would have approved of the killing in the *Playboy*. I am sure, indeed, he would have shot nobody except a landlord, and I doubt whether he would have shot even a landlord.

You will usually find that, when people object to the representation of a fellow-countryman in a play, it is on the ground that others will regard the character as typical. Obviously the Scots have never thought that there was any danger of Macbeth's being taken for a typical Scotsman: if it had been otherwise, there might often have been rowdy scenes in the Edinburgh and Glasgow theatres. In the same way the English theatre has tolerated thousands of English villains because their characters were looked on not as typical but as exceptional. Cigarette-smoking English villains in evening dress were common in old-fashioned melodrama, but even the most simple-minded gallery boy was never misled into the belief that every Englishman who wore evening dress and smoked cigarettes was a villain. Wicked baronets, again, flourished in popular fiction; but this was not regarded as subversive propaganda against hereditary titles, nor did it have this effect. If England were judged by the bad English characters in imaginative literature—Mr. Murdstone, Bill Sikes, Mr. Squeers, among them—she would seem a land of monsters. But it is only in Nazi propaganda that Mr. Squeers figures as a typical English schoolmaster; and it is doubtful whether Dickens, with all his bad characters, has lowered the reputation of England in the world as a whole.

In reading great literature, of course, one seldom thinks of it as portraying the life of a nation. One takes it for granted that forces of good and evil are at war in every country, and the story of their clash is a story that has little to do with geography. It is at times as though the action took place in Ruritania. Novels, of course, do often give us pictures of national life; but the chief characters are exceptional figures, not representatives of their country. Even Alan Breck is something more than a typical Highlander, and half the appeal of Falstaff is due to the fact that he is not a typical Englishman. It is because they realise such things that Englishmen have never protested against any play on the ground that it is an insult to England in the same way in which Irishmen protested that *The Playboy* was an insult to Ireland. There has been occasional trouble about some book or play in England, but I do not think it has ever been on the ground that it was a libel on English life.

At the same time, Englishmen have occasionally been sensitive about the manner in which they were represented abroad. I knew one man who, when slightly under the influence of drink, made a scene in a foreign cinema because the film showed a comic long-toothed Englishman in a check suit, thus (the interrupter thought) lowering British prestige on the Continent. Possibly, if it became the custom to introduce English villains into foreign films and to make Englishmen invariably treacherous, rapacious and cruel, even English phlegm might be roused to protest. The Englishman, unfortunately, is not sinister-looking enough to appeal to foreign film-producers as a desirable villain. Or, perhaps, it is only because one has lived so long among Englishmen that one thinks so. I cannot help feeling—it may be only an illusion—that in order to see melodramatic-looking villains by the gross one has to go abroad.

The Japanese have, to European eyes, the necessary sinister look for villainy. It will be interesting to see what Hollywood makes of them, inventing imaginary wickednesses for the pleasure of a world in which real wickedness flourishes to a degree till lately inconceivable. Y. Y.

POWER-DRUNK

I WOULD like to tell you a story about a certain police officer. A very interesting person.

I am sorry I don't remember in what town this remarkable person lives. I recollect reading a little note about him in a Harkov newspaper. As for the name of his native town, I've completely forgotten it. I've got a bad memory.

In any case, it is not as important as all that. The citizens of that town should themselves keep a register of their heroes. They might remember his name, which was Drojkin.

So it happened in a small town, somewhere in the provinces. On a Sunday.

Picture to yourself spring time, and the bright sunlight playing on everything. Nature, so to speak, waking up. The grass beginning to turn green, and so on and so forth.

The townsmen, of course, all turned out into the streets. Wearing down the pavement, taking walks up and down the town.

And in the midst of the townsfolk the assistant chief of the local police, Comrade Drojkin, in person, was also taking a walk. He was out for a walk with his spouse. She was wearing a charming "toilette" made of cotton print, with a hat, an umbrella and goloshes.

They strolled along just as if they were ordinary mortals, as if they did not mind being in the midst of ordinary folk. They were walking along the common pavement arm-in-arm.

Thus they reached the corner of the former Treasury Street. Suddenly they stopped. Right along the pavement reserved for the use of humans was walking a pig. A fairly large pig it was, weighing perhaps fourteen or fifteen stone.

Lord alone knows how she'd got there. The fact was that she had got there, and was obviously upsetting public order.

And on the top of all this, Comrade Drojkin, too, happened to be there with his spouse.

Goodness gracious! What if Comrade Drojkin doesn't like looking at a pig? Maybe he would prefer to look at some much more exalted aspect of Nature in his hours off duty? And here was a pig! What careless behaviour on the pig's part, one might say! And who was guilty of letting such a monster wander abroad? An unthinkable carelessness!

As for Comrade Drojkin, he was a hot-headed man. He grew angry at once.

"Whose pig is this?" he shouted. "Be so kind as to liquidate it immediately!"

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Company Meeting

F. W. WOOLWORTH

THE thirty-third annual general meeting of F. W. Woolworth and Co., Ltd., was held on Friday in London, Mr. W. L. Stephenson, the chairman, presiding. The following is an extract from the statement by the chairman circulated with the report and accounts :

The company produced a profit of £6,404,759 for the year 1941, a fall of £1,553,400 compared with the previous year. The recommended final distribution is down by 6d. per unit. A year ago I ventured the opinion that increased war activity would bring new difficulties and further restrictions. It has, and that is the reason for both reduced profits and lower dividend.

It is not surprising that those charged with the full prosecution of the war should find themselves compelled to divert both labour and materials to the all-important purposes of war and to reduce to a minimum the balance available of consumer goods for the people.

Consequently, last year was a most difficult one for the retail trader. All, large or small, faced the same limitation of supplies, all were affected by the widening of consumer rationing, further depletion of staff, contraction of selling space, etc. In our case it must be borne in mind that a number of our fine stores lie in ruins, and in others we have been called upon to surrender valuable space for the use of Government departments. The purchase tax operated during the full course of the year, and the process of collecting some £3,500,000 was a costly and troublesome operation.

I have digressed sufficiently, and hope I have made it clear that with the existing restrictions we cannot influence business, but can only distribute such supplies as become available.

In view of all this, I look upon the result of the company's trading for 1941 as most satisfactory. Substantial sums have been written off profits for the year, many peculiar only to war conditions.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

The passers-by, naturally, were taken aback. They just stood and said nothing.

"The sort of things that go on in broad daylight!" the assistant police chief said. "Pigs push the passers-by off the pavement! A man can hardly step without bumping into a pig! I'll put a bullet through him straight away!"

And as he said this, Comrade Drojkin whipped out his revolver. Of course, there was some agitation and embarrassment among the local inhabitants. Some of the more experienced passers-by, who had been in the military service, sprang hastily aside, so as not to be in the way of the bullet.

But as the assistant chief was about to take his aim at the pig, his wife interfered.

"Peter," she said, "is there any need to shoot him with a revolver? Maybe he's just going to walk under this gate."

At that moment a small elderly woman appeared from the gate, looking for something.

"Ach," she says, "goodness gracious! That's where he's got to, my pig! Please, comrade officer, don't frighten him with your revolver. I'll get him away presently."

But Comrade Drojkin lost his temper again.

"Ah," he said, "your pig, is it? I'll give him a good dose of lead straight away. As for you, I'll send you to the police station to teach you to let your pigs run loose in the streets."

His wife, then, interfered again.

"Peter," she said, "let us go, for Heaven's sake. We'll be late for dinner."

And in her silliness she, of course, pulled her husband by the sleeve, meaning to say "Come along now."

At this, the assistant police officer turned pale with anger.

"Ah," said he, "you dare interfere with the actions and orders of the police? You dare to pull a police officer by the sleeve? I'll have you arrested on the spot."

And Comrade Drojkin blew his whistle to summon a policeman on point duty.

"Please take this citizeness to the police station," he told him. "She was interfering with the actions of the police."

The policeman took the incautious spouse of his superior by the arm, and led her away to the police station.

The spectators preserved complete silence.

How long the wife stayed at the police station and what were the consequences of the family quarrel, we do not know.

MIKHAIL ZOSHCHENKO
(*Trans. by Elisaveta Fen*)

SIR JOSHUA

ON the 150th anniversary of Reynolds's death it must be admitted that his painting is less highly considered by artists and *cognoscenti* than at any time since 1770. He fostered a natural gift with the most admirable sedulity, but he was deficient no less in force of imagination than in sensibility of handling. In fact, he lacked what, since the Romantic Movement, we mean by "genius." While his best portraits are masterpieces of characterisation, his practice as a fashionable portrait-painter led him to manufacture large numbers of flattering and merely efficient likenesses. Yet Sir Joshua justly remains one of the dominant figures of the English eighteenth century. Not a consummate artist, like Pope or Gibbon, not a profound thinker, like Locke or Hume, he became, like these, a European figure. His Discourses, translated into French, Italian and German, excited the enthusiasm of Diderot's friend, Catharine the Great; the Swedish Academy and the Uffizi required portraits of him. Combining the belief in culture that was characteristic of the eighteenth century, with the sterling sense that we like to think characteristic of England, Sir Joshua stands as the prime representative of an illustrious tradition.

Although not highly educated, he was eminently an intellectual. "When Reynolds tells me something," said Dr. Johnson, "I consider myself possessed of an idea the more." "To be such a painter," said Burke, "he was a profound and penetrating philosopher." This is excessive, but it was the natural acuity of Sir Joshua's mind that first won for him Johnson's friendship: two ladies were regretting the death of a friend for whom they had great obligations, and Reynolds remarked: "You have, however, the comfort of being relieved from a burthen of gratitude." Reynolds, so indefatigable in improving his painting by study of the Old Masters, was no less assiduous in improving his mind by conversation with scholars and philosophers. To his students he insisted upon the importance for artists of "frequenting learned and ingenious men"—an exacting discipline that later and more Bohemian artists have, comprehensibly but to their own disadvantage, too often neglected. "Taste," he proclaimed, "does not come by chance; it is a long and laborious task to acquire it"; and one of his most humiliating experiences, he tells us, was that on his first visit to the Vatican he felt no relish for Raphael. The notion, recently ventilated in the *Times*, that the average man is the ultimate judge of a work of art, would have struck him as patently grotesque: "It is the lowest style only of arts, whether of painting, poetry or music, that may be said, in the vulgar sense, to be naturally pleasing."

Indeed, this insistence on the need for cultivating taste by study provides the central theme of the great Discourses he pronounced as President of the Royal Academy. Exact reproduction of nature, he pointed out, was a bad criterion: artists must learn incessantly from the Old Masters. Often, it must be admitted, his respect for the past led him into a convention of pomposity. Ruskin complained that Sir Joshua never trusted himself outside the park palings, and one remembers Dr. Primrose in *The Vicar of Wakefield*:

> My wife desired to be represented as Venus, and the painter was requested not to be too frugal of his diamonds in her stomacher and hair. Her two little ones were to be as Cupids by her side, while, I, in my gown and bands, was to present her with my books on the Whistonian controversy.

But it is ironical that the Royal Academy has, during the last hundred years, so carefully opposed itself to all the precepts of its first President. Nobody expects an academy to embrace innovations, and such startling originators as Courbet, Degas and Van Gogh cannot easily be seen, except by posterity, as continuing the great traditions of painting. If we had an equivalent literary academy, it would not, it should not, have elected the author of *Ulysses*, but indubitably it would have honoured a Bridges and a Binyon. The Royal Academy of Arts, however, deplores the Binyons of painting hardly less than the Joyces, and has preferred to elect the Ethel M. Dells.

In Reynolds's time, by following his counsel, an artist with a modicum of gift could produce respectable pictures. Gradually, and concurrently with the spread of the Industrial Revolution, the tradition wilted and finally collapsed. To-day art is suffering immeasurably from the absence of any definite tradition that painters can follow. A contemporary Sir Joshua, beginning to construct his Discourses, would wonder where to find his foundations. Instead of the Caracci and Tibaldi, he would have to consider Ingres and Goya, Pissarro and Cézanne. He would need to enlarge his scope from the Renaissance to the art of the Middle Ages, of the Orient, of backward peoples. Yet the *Discourses* (apart from such details as their preferring mere drapery to particularised textiles) remain valid; and every good artist I have known confesses the same grateful veneration for the Old Masters as was inculcated, so thoughtfully and so usefully, by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

ROGER MARVELL

THE MOVIES

"Film and Reality"
Ministry of Information Films.
"Louisiana Purchase," at the Plaza.

I make no apology for returning to Cavalcanti's *Film and Reality*, mentioned in this column last

week. At present it can only be shown to schools, film societies and service units, but some day, in some form or other, I hope that it will reach a wider public. It is absurd that one of the best pieces of criticism we have had of the film should be hidden away from cinemas. These fifty odd extracts from films of all kinds—newsreels, features, travel pictures and documentaries—illustrate a theme. Though Cavalcanti never says so in as many words, the selection and juxtaposition of his material impress on us a central fact: the camera records actuality, and though it may lend itself to explorations of fancy we come back to the natural object squarely or elusively photographed. The glimpses from newsreels—Queen Victoria's funeral (1901) and the assassination in Marseilles of King Alexander (1934)—show this realism in its most artless form, as the front-page journalism of the screen. On a higher aesthetic level are the films of plants growing, of Arctic exploration, of athletes, of machinery or microbes, which discover a beauty in what they set out to record: the Secrets of Nature films, quite apart from their scientific value, reveal often a poetry outside the range of the human eye. Higher still, the discovery of man in his environment, and this is illustrated by many glimpses from interest films and documentaries. Highest of all, those documentaries—*Moana*, *Rien Que Les Heures*, *Turksib*, *Drifters*, *Earth*, *The Song of Ceylon*—in which actuality and imagination balance, so that we see things or people as they are but with an added intensity. This, I believe—despite successes in other directions—is the film's real province, in which it triumphs where no other art can. The distinction between document and fiction disappears; *Kameradschaft*, *Target for To-night*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, whether one calls them stories or not, belong obviously to the same class. The aim of *Film and Reality* is to increase our appetite for realism, which it does, brilliantly and with a surprising diversity, for two hours. Let me repeat that Cavalcanti, if I have understood him, does not *exclude* the imaginative production but merely demonstrates what seems to him the main stream in cinematography. There is room here for endless argument about art and entertainment, fiction and reality, but the fact remains that the camera as an instrument copies rather than creates. The lesson is brought home almost every day. Which are the compelling films of the war—*Target for To-night* or *Captains of the Clouds*, *Ferry Pilot* or *Ships With Wings*, *Merchant Seamen* or *Convoy*, *50 Degrees Below* or *In the Rear of the Enemy*, *Men of the Lightship* or *The Long Voyage Home*? In each case, unquestionably I think, the first. And what is true of the film in wartime is as true at any other time. One point only in his critical survey Cavalcanti appears to have missed: the Zolaesque realism, which has had an important influence on others less gifted, of such pioneers as Lupu Pick and Von Stroheim. A scene or two from the latter's *Greed*, in itself a criticism of fictional values on the screen, ought surely to have been included.

A new batch of M.O.I. films adds point to the argument. They are not, of course, disinterested, for each in its way aims at instructing and infusing energy into our war effort; and admirably, from the lives of land-girl and Polish airman, builders and engineers, the lesson is conveyed. But the keynote is realism; propaganda becomes the more effective because our eyes are opened to the life round us. The ploughing scenes in *Land Girl*, the workmen talking in *Builders*, the tragic story of a young Pole sketched in *An Airman's Diary*, the little export corps of *Mobile Engineers* bringing instruction to new hands, Moscow, like London, suffering air attack in *Tale of Two Cities*, and the factory and machine sounds threaded with music in *Listen to Britain*: all these documentaries have moments when they touch us more closely than any except a very few feature films. They set a very high standard indeed; and the tradition that has produced them owes more, perhaps, to Cavalcanti than to any other man.

My choice among "features" this week is *Louisiana Purchase*: musical comedy with Bob Hope, some gay indoor patterns in technicolour, lively story, fun for the roving eye, and a new discovery in Victor Moore, who brings jaegers and middle age into the limelight.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Walter Goehr and L.S.O Concert. Wigmore Hall. February 21st

The second concert of this series was considerably more enterprising, if less wholly successful, than the first. The Symphony No. 46 in B, by Haydn, performed for the first time in this country since its composition, some 165 years ago at Esterhazy, proved to be a very romantic and advanced work, with some astonishing B minor sequences, reminiscent of the mature Beethoven, at the end of the first movement. The re-introduction of the Minuet in the Finale, though startling, seemed a mistake, for it altered the musical sense of the movement without contributing anything relevant to the subject. After this, Count McCormack sang five of Wolf's songs, to orchestral accompaniment. This was not a good combination, though it was interesting to hear Wolf's tortuous and elaborate instrumentation. The Count was not in good voice and could rarely be heard properly; one was left with the feeling—erroneous when one recalls the originals—that all the expression had been relegated to the accompaniment and that Wolf had fitted on the voice-line afterwards, in the worst Wagnerian fashion. In any case, even a strong voice would have difficulty in extricating itself from so thick a web of moving parts as most of these versions indulge in. With Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* we reached the *pièce de résistance*. This is indeed one of the century's most remarkable works, in which rhythmical complexity, for once allied (as it never has been by Stravinsky) to a solid harmonic structure, produces something like great music. The introductory fugue is possibly as fine as that in Beethoven's C sharp minor Quartet, and the imagination displayed in the Adagio is both powerful and disquieting. It is greatly to the credit of Mr. Goehr that he should have managed, under wartime conditions, to secure an adequate performance of so uniquely difficult a work.

Moore, Sutherland and Piper at the City Literary Institute

Those who saw the exhibition of Moore, Sutherland and Piper in the beautiful setting of Temple Newsam will be disappointed in the reduced version now cabined and confined into one room of the City Literary Institute in Stukeley Street. Henry Moore's sculpture, which beside the great windows of Temple Newsam seemed to echo the hills and hollows of the Yorkshire landscape, now looks as desolate as if it were awaiting sale in an auctioneer's parlour. The paintings of Graham Sutherland, which at Leeds glowed on dark oak panelling, now serve chiefly as mirrors to reflect the ravaged features of baffled visitors; and, when they can be seen, are hung so close together as to be rather overpowering to all but the strongest appetite. Only the Henry Moore drawings, insulated by their mounts and by their own formidable coherency, reach something like their proper potential. Those who do not yet appreciate the work of these artists, or recognise the importance of Moore and Sutherland in modern painting, are not likely to be converted; but those who are already persuaded will be glad to know that the exhibition contains a new, large painting by Sutherland, and two by Piper, which are amongst the best that either artist has done. Sutherland's landscape, done in the interval of his recent pictures of steel furnaces, seems to be suffused with a kind of rapture at returning to the works of God after two years' contemplation of the work, whether destructive or constructive, of man. Unfortunately, it is barely visible. Piper's large painting of Seton Delaval is solider and more inherently dramatic than anything he has done. The fusion between his love of architecture and his interest

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in abstract design is complete. But in spite of the pleasure to be gained from these new works and from Henry Moore's drawings, this exhibition has done a disservice to the artists represented. Finally, a protest must be made against the poster, a pretentious caricature of motives drawn from the three artists' work and jumbled together, with a result not unlike a specimen of "modern art" in a comic paper.

"A Doll's House," at the Everyman

This production gives visitors to the Everyman the opportunity of seeing the part of Nora interpreted by Helen Burns with an understanding and versatility rare in a young actress. Miss Burns has felt acutely and conveys with great skill each phase of Nora's emotional experience—her gaiety with her husband, her dignity on the first visit of Krogstad, her terror when she discovers the enormity of her crime, her hysteria, and lastly her calm reasoning and her disappointment that the miracle has not happened. She makes the audience share the nightmare she endures during three supposedly happy days. Helen Burns is an actress one will be eager to see again. She is supported by a cast of young actors who have made a brave attempt with this play. Ann Barclay, as Mrs. Linden, supplies the right contrast to Nora, and of the men, Derek Randal as Dr. Rank gives the best performance, though perhaps he is portrayed as too old a man to make a reality of his great friendship with Torvald.

"Jam To-day," at the St. Martin's Theatre

Messrs. Denis Waldock and Roger Burford can write excellent light dialogue, can run even to a situation that lasts for three minutes, but seem not to realise that even the lightest comedy needs the foundation of an idea, and that characters require a past as well as a present. But this rickety play is saved, almost, by the acting. Miss Olga Lindo plays a feather-headed woman with a beautifully effortless accomplishment. Miss Beatrix Lehmann, most commendably trying a role outside her usual range, plays with great gusto, and succeeds in conveying a character more interesting than the text suggests. Mr. Frank Pettingell, subtly avoiding the temptation to be restless or emphatic, gives a performance that could not be bettered. The rest of the cast gave useful support, and if the play never boils, it continually simmers.

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Correspondence

SILENT REVOLUTION

SIR,—May I confirm that the state of mind which your contributor, writing under the heading "The Silent Revolution," suggests exists in the Army to-day also largely obtains in the Navy.

There seems a general sense of bewilderment at this country's apparently repeated failure to be prepared at the right time in the right place. It is quite true, as your contributor remarks, that there is no great interest in the British Communist Party, but there certainly is very much interest in Communism. To a large extent this interest is unfixed, the general attitude being that "things will have to be very different after the war." But the younger men are not going to support the old parties, all of which seem to them responsible for the present mistakes and obscurities. I think that the only reason that there is not more active support of the British Communist Party is because of the inability of a section of that party at the beginning of the war to decide whether the greater enemy was Nazi Germany or "vested interests" at home. That, together with an implied synonym to "anarchism," has made the very word "Communist" suspect. But if through the lifting of the ban on news of Russia's progress during the last twenty years, combined with the obvious spirit for resisting and attacking aggression which the Soviet Republic has brought to the Russian peoples, this feeling of suspicion is allayed, then the majority of men are going to support any party which offers the same inspiration.

Sir Stafford Cripps surely placed his finger exactly on the pulse of the nation when he remarked that he sensed a slackness, a disinterestedness, among the people. This disinterestedness does percolate into the Services. Men wonder what they are fighting for. The old and empty jingoisms about "Freedom," "Homeland," no longer satisfy. There is a suspicion that all will not be well after the peace—that, after all, we are fighting for property and private interests. Were it otherwise they feel that there would be no young bachelors working for enormous wages in order to inflate costs; there would be no private gain from the manufacture of munitions; no "10 per cent. plus."

The men in the Services generally have confidence in the Prime Minister and largely acquiesced in the criticisms raised at Westminster during the last debate. Here also distrust is largely levelled at the ministers supporting, or sheltering behind, Mr. Churchill. But it seems ridiculous to say to the man responsible: "We are perfectly satisfied with your work, but what about those obeying your instructions?" It is surely logical that the master must be answerable for his servants. If they fail to satisfy and are not replaced, then the master will also share the blame.

Nor was any confidence restored through the debate on increases in Service Men's Pay. It is regrettable that a supporter of the Government should be permitted to remark that "the Army always grumbles, but it carries on." Such a statement is hardly conducive to satisfaction among men. Indeed, it is on an uncomfortable parallel with, "Let them eat cake." Above all, the one thing which necessarily concerns Service men most, namely pensions, was not touched. Men would be much more satisfied if they could feel that their wives and children would be adequately provided for in the event of the bread-winner being killed. Furthermore, everybody wants to know exactly what are the "extra remunerations" to which Mr. Churchill so mysteriously referred in his reply to Dr. Edith Summerskill.

To sum up, I can only reiterate that among Service men there is mistrust and questioning which, while offering great hope for the world of the future, is decidedly not going to produce the necessary morale to wage a successful war against an enemy which knows, or has been cajoled into believing it knows, for what it is fighting. Men, not only men in the Services, but all the men and women of Britain, want the same faith and knowledge that the people of the U.S.S.R. have. Namely, that what they are fighting for belongs to them, is a part of them. Given this, there will be no distressing cries of "production," "output": no necessity for the Prime Minister's rhetorical adjurations for unity and effort. The same spirit which stirred the people of Spain and which now animates the Russians will sweep through our people urging them on to relentless efforts and to victory.

SAILOR

A MAN'S A MAN

SIR,—I wonder if you have noticed how frequently the Japanese are referred to as "those yellow little creatures" by many British papers here. I can understand why the Nazis are called "Huns," but the association of their brutality with their being "yellow" is a little vague to me. Mind you, I am not protesting as a member of the yellow race, simply because I am no more anxious to claim kinship with the Yamato hordes than you with Adolf Hitler. The fact that in China, when the complexion of a beautiful woman is described "as white as jade" instead of "as yellow as a canary," shows how little conscious we are of the place we belong to in the paint-box of mankind. But each time when a city in the Far East is evacuated, the population is invariably divided between the

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JONATHAN CAPE

Europeans (which illogically includes the Americans) on the one hand, and the "coloured people" (with "natives" and "Asiatics" as alternatives) on the other. Behind this rough classification I fear that there is still the old white men's consciousness lurking. It is unpleasant but true to say that the Japanese propagandists have exploited this time-worn generalisation with some success.

But are there any colourless people on earth except those standing in Madame Tussaud's? Of all colours, nothing frightens me more than wax! Be one's face a Devon apple, a half-ripen tomato, or a brownish dumpling, there is always so much more life.

Yet under the artificial banner of "coloured people" the Japs have enticed many an innocent lamb into their cave. In 1939, when I was travelling in Burma, at a time when the Japanese were pumping their salt-fish flavoured pan-Asiatism into that country, I heard on several occasions the words "We coloured people." If the Japs did not quite succeed in their design, it was not so much due to the magnanimity shown by the colourless as by the miseries suffered by the Chinese people. Those untold miseries have most eloquently refuted the illusion of the Tokio-made paradise which the Japanese never cease to try to create among the neighbouring peoples. This play on "colour" has always been one of the favourite tricks of the Japanese propagandists in preaching their gospel of "co-prosperity." Surely no one here would like to play their game!

Indeed, in the past 50 years, there had been several outbursts of anti-foreign sentiment in China, conspicuously the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 and the Shanghai Tragedy in 1925. If so, why did the Japanese "the coloured against the white" campaign fail completely in China? Happily, our 5,000-year-old civilisation has endowed us with some shrewdness, thanks to that sagacious old man, Confucius. Then, the Chinese have never learned to regard people in terms of their complexion. The Boxer Rebellion was admittedly an ignorant but desperate revolt against the pressure of the unequal treaties. So were the riots in Shanghai, Shamen and Wan-hsien. During the Boxer Rebellion there were many hundred times more martyrs among Chinese Christians than the European missionaries. Chinese pedlars of foodstuff risked their lives to smuggle things into the besieged Legation. (One of such egg-pedlars was, in fact, shot by a Frenchman in order to show off his marksmanship.) In 1925 I was in my secondary school. I had British teachers with whom we remained friends throughout those unpleasant days. In the last decade, in spite of the speeches of Sir John and the articles of Sir Francis, China has nothing but affection and gratitude towards Britain. In reading the newspapers we generally cover up those Genevan speeches with our sleeves and gaze at the arrival of the boxes of medicine and books from the British people, the help given by Sir F. Leith-Ross and the news about the anti-Japanese demonstration staged in London by the China Campaign Committee. Long before China was called an ally, we have regarded ourselves as such. With all the assurance given by Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden, I have no doubt that the unequal treaties will have become a historical relic of the pre-war world. If we have always been friends in the past, I believe that we shall become brothers, having come through such a deadly grim struggle hand in hand.

With such a rosy picture in mind I venture to suggest that we should uproot the colour-bias. The war has proved that there can only be a good egg or a bad egg; discrimination between the yolk and the white should not be encouraged. Besides its healthful effect on the happier post-war world, such a total regrouping of mankind other than in terms of colour would certainly help to counteract the Japanese trick of enticement.

HSIAO CHIEN

Hampstead.

PRODUCTION

SIR,—Me and Spot (my terrier bitch) read your pamphlet on Production, and did we laugh?

Not that we could find anything wrong with your argument, either in its general line or in detail. Anyone who thinks about the matter at all knows perfectly well that unless we do something of the kind, and do it soon, we stand a good chance of losing the war. What amused us was not so much what you propose to do, but how you seem to think you can do it. The very fact that you have published your study is evidence that you hope to *convince* people by careful and conclusive argument that the course of action you suggest is necessary. The only people you have to convince about it are the people who now hold the reins of power, the financial and commercial magnates your proposals would eliminate. Compared with that as a subject for canine hilarity, dishes running away with spoons is nothing.

They are perfectly well aware, and have been all along, that complete nationalisation of war industry is a one-way process, and would be for them the end of the world. In effect you are asking them very politely to commit suicide. On your own showing there is nothing in modern commercial morality equivalent to the Japanese contempt for death, described in your columns last week, that would lead us to expect them to commit "hara-kiri" in this way.

What, then, is the alternative? Is it not rather that after the loss of Burma and India; the virtual liquidation of our position in the Mediterranean; and the beating back, after terrific losses on both sides, of the first of the series of invasions of these shores; then, when most of these men have fled to the States or South Africa or the Argentine (many of them have already taken the precaution to send their wives and families there)—then those of us who are left will be free to mould the pitiful remnants of our national economy nearer to our heart's desire.

It is not a pretty picture, but it took a Dunkirk to get rid of Chamberlain, and a Singapore to get a War Cabinet; both, you must admit, after years of cogent but completely ineffective argument. It is easy enough to see why argument in cases like these is fruitless. The whole point of any argument is to present to your opponent a reasoned and reasonable alternative *which he is in a position to accept*. The alternative we offer is, as I say, complete elimination—a solution that by its very nature no body of men will accede to of their own volition.

Yesterday afternoon Spot took me on one of her favourite walks through the fields near our home. On our way back we passed an old tip, the happy hunting-ground of a colony of rats, and in the summer-time of numerous other vermin. One of the inhabitants was indiscreet enough to reveal himself to the dog; what followed gave me my chance to laugh. Without any hesitation, Spot showed him the argument of her teeth. It is up to us.

153, Sylvia Avenue, Bristol, 3.

W. L. GOODMAN

BREAD

SIR,—Neither Mr. Boothby nor anyone else can tell whether the public like National Wheatmeal bread. They have never tasted it.

I doubt if Mr. Boothby himself has tasted the genuine article. He had already left the Ministry of Food, I think, when sample rolls, made from the Ministry's own eighty-five per cent. extraction flour and baked under the Ministry's supervision were handed round at a press conference early last summer. Some fifty or sixty food reporters ate it and said it was excellent.

This bread, which I have not been able to get anywhere since, is of an even, light-golden colour, and its texture is smooth and very fine. If eighty-five per cent. extraction is adopted, this is the bread the public should get. I think they will like it.

A. D. PETERS

PLUTO AND PERSEPHONE

SIR,—Dr. Robson is agile in evading the point. In common with many other influential people, he advocates spreading industry and population more evenly over the country, dispersing it from Lancashire, the Potteries and other "densely populated" indus-

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BY VICTOR GOLLANCZ · 2/6

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trial areas to the West Country, East Anglia and Westmorland. They ignore, however, the fact which I persistently and unrepentantly point out, that our so-called overcrowded areas are not so on analysis—a 25-mile radius of Manchester averaging only 3 persons to the acre, and the other industrial regions yielding similar figures. The problem there is one of waste land, derelict factories, redundant roads, unused natural wealth both in human skill and of mineral resources. But the new freedom given to industry by electric power will reinforce the disinclination of intending manufacturers to start in the squalor of existing industrial areas, unless the plan which directs them is also concerned in replanning those areas. We cannot afford other Dagenhams unnecessarily ruining agricultural land, or other Cowleys mutilating such towns as Oxford, when they could instead have rescued and regenerated South Wales or the North-East coast. I would unhesitatingly direct a new industry to Wigan or Norwich according to the nature of that industry—i.e., more naturally allied to extractive industry or to agriculture. And I would remind Mr. Haward that Wigan has a civic tradition as old and proud as Norwich; while the products of shipyards, of iron and steel works, of coal, are likely to be in great demand for some time after the war.

From practical experiment and long study of housing and town planning in this and other countries I know how pleasant, how rich and full of interest a well-planned city can be, even though—even because—it is based on the great extractive mining industries. I know, too, how much our market towns will repay intensive exploitation of the numerous by-product industries based on and relevant to the various branches of prosperous agriculture.

Replanning, enriching, exploiting the skill, tradition, materials of a derelict area to the utmost, whether town or country, seems to me much more interesting and worth while for its inhabitants than running away, whether from the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution or of agricultural neglect.

ELIZABETH DENBY

SIR,—The Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population made an intensive study of Pluto and came to the conclusion "that a Central Authority, national in scope and character, is required, and that the objectives of national action should be

"(*a*) Continued and further redevelopment of congested urban areas, where necessary.

"(*b*) Decentralisation or dispersal, both of industries and industrial population, from such areas.

"(*c*) Encouragement of a reasonable balance of industrial development, with appropriate diversification of industry in each division or region throughout the country."

Miss Denby in her article lays rather exclusive stress on objective (*a*). Mr. Robson wishes to emphasise that all three objectives are of importance, but that (*b*) is the most important since it is the key to the successful achievement of (*a*) and (*c*). His is certainly the balanced view, and the view that accords with the objectives of the Royal Commission, which are in general "what the planning movement is aiming at."

With modern power and transport, Pluto need no longer be tied to the infernal regions: instead with "shining morning face" he may well become an acceptable suitor to Persephone and find a permanent place in her heart. DAVID B. WILLIAMSON

ABBEY THEATRE

SIR,—In your issue of February 7th my friend, Mr. V. S. Pritchett, writes vividly and amusingly about the Abbey Theatre as he knew it. In describing the pleasant side-shows afforded by the Abbey, he mentions that occasionally a priest up from the country would arise in the stalls and cry out, "Blasphemy! Blasphemy!" I regret to spoil sport even in the interests of accuracy. May I point out, however, that, under a very well known disciplinary rule, no Catholic clergyman is permitted to attend a public dramatic performance in a theatre in his own country. The explostulating figures which Mr. Pritchett appears to have both seen and heard must therefore be regarded as figments of his imagination, doubtless overheated by his first visit to Dublin.

Many of the rows upon which the Abbey thrived in its early days were simply due to "howlers" similar to that made by Mr. Pritchett. We had a number of distinguished dramatists, practically all of Protestant upbringing, who insisted on writing exclusively about their Catholic neighbours. Unfortunately, these distinguished dramatists did not always take the trouble to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the real background or idiom of the subjects which they chose to interpret. In art, surely, there is no place for inaccuracy.

Bridge House, AUSTIN CLARKE
Templeogue, Co. Dublin.

DAY NURSERIES

SIR,—Although it is recognised that day nurseries are few in number a related problem seems to have been neglected. If the home is closed during the day when the mother is away at work, there is no provision for looking after children as soon as they are sick.

The usual story is, "Can you take him in, doctor, my neighbour can't do with him now he is ill." It is also becoming usual for a mother herself to bring the child to hospital. Admission to hospital is unnecessary and must be refused. This limited accommodation, with the skilled nursing care, must be reserved for serious cases. It is probably a cold—a tummy upset perhaps—two or three days in bed either at home, or similar suitable conditions, is all that is needed. These minor ailments can soon become serious illnesses when neglected. It is only when this has happened that provision is made for their care, as things are organised at present.

By this inadequate care these children are a drain upon the resources of the country themselves, morbidity is increased, and by having an anxious mother there is loss of production in industry.

E. M. B. CLEMENTS

SASSENACH CADS

SIR,—It pained me deeply to observe that your "This England" gave disgrace of place to this cutting from my "Pertinent and Otherwise" columns:—

> Noel Coward is now making a film about the life of a destroyer, and he himself is playing the captain. In an interview given to a contemporary he explained: "I'm only playing it because I want to show how ordinary I can be—not that smart, witty Noel Coward, but just a commonplace, simple human being."

It isn't that I object to your profiting from my researches. The only point I want to make clear to the infinitesimally small number of people who don't read my notes daily is that (in performing sanitary duties similar to those undertaken by "This England") I was doing a spot of guying on my own account. If you had retained my heading, "Tribute to Captains," the quotation would have been fairer to me.

Your transgression has given me threefold pain. There is the feeling of being hit below the belt by an old friend. There is the much worse feeling that the five-shilling award ought, by rights, to have been mine; and, to cap all, there is the shocking humiliation, for a Scot writing in a Scots newspaper, of being publicly lumped together with the nitwits of *That England*.

Play the game, you Sassenach cads, or I'll take my claymore to you! PASSER-BY
The "Bulletin,"
65, Buchanan Street, Glasgow, C.1.

[The barb was not directed at our correspondent, but at the statement which he quoted. The original statement, not the quotation, should have won the 5s. As for *This England*—that was Shakespeare's fault for not being a Scotsman. Being half-Scottish ourselves we feel this bitterly.—ED., "*N.S. & N.*"]

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE disappearance of illustrations from the English novel, and indeed the decline of the art of illustrating, is a loss to literary criticism. For one of the obligations of the critic is to possess himself of the eyes with which a novelist's contemporaries read him, and this the good illustrator helped him to do. Of course one never achieves this sight, but one can approach it. And how far off the mark one can be is shown by the shock that a good illustrator gives. Cruikshank, for example: he upsets all the weary pieties of realism which lie between us and a comprehension of Dickens, and half the silly criticisms of Dickens need never have been written if Cruikshank had been studied as closely as the text. And Rowlandson: pick up an edition of Smollett that has Rowlandson's illustrations and see Smollett come into focus once more, so that his page is almost as fresh to us as it must have appeared to the 18th century reader. It is true that outside this school of illustration the argument begins to wilt; the wooden severity of late Victorian realism was a lugubrious travesty of the text and one is glad that illustration has been dropped. The fact is that illustration was at its best when the English novel also was in its brash, vital, fantastic youth; when, though wigged in a judicious style, it had only a simple and crude concern with caricature, anecdote and the bad manners of society. Once it abandoned travel and developed plot and form, the English novel ceased to need the illustrator, or at any rate ceased to get the right one.

There are two pointers in the engravings which Rowlandson did for *Humphry Clinker* and which the reader of Smollett ought to follow. Look at the scrawny figure of that ghastly virgin, Tabitha Bramble, as she comes accusing into the room where her philanthropical brother has been caught with a lady he is helping; look at Humphry in the gaol, moaning out his grotesque Methodism to the felons; look at her ladyship, gluttonous, diseased and warty, tearing out her friend's hair. These are not human beings. They are lumps of animal horror or stupidity. To Rowlandson the human race were cattle or swine, a ghastly fat stock done up in ribbons or breeches, who had got into coffee houses, beds and drawing-rooms. He was nauseated by domesticity, and the grossness of the eighteenth century's new rich. In fact, every eighteenth-century artist and writer jibed at the filth of domestic life at some time or other. These pictures of Rowlandson's (and Hogarth's too) show how urgent was the task of the reform of manners which the writers of the eighteenth century had set themselves from Addison onwards. (The movement had been revived by William III, who, when he came from Holland, was horrified by the brutality of English life. He encouraged Defoe, especially, to write in the cause of reform.) The second point is that Rowlandson's people are portraits of Swift's Yahoos. In these pictures one sees the nightmare lying behind the Augustan manner. The nightmare of the pox, the scurvy, delirium tremens, of obesity and gout, the nightmare of the insanitary streets, of the stairway which was a dunghill, of the sedate Georgian window which was a place for the emptying of chamber-pots; the nightmare of the suppurations that flowed into the waters at Bath, of the stenches that rose from the "elegant" crowds at the Assemblies; the nightmare of the lives of children flogged into stupidity—see the boyhood of *Peregrine Pickle*—so that, in Rowlandson and Hogarth, all the virtuous people look like lumps of suet; and rising through this, the nightmare religion of Wesley. Smollett and Rowlandson run so closely together in the drawing of these things that one borrows from the other's brutality. Yet are they brutal? I do not know enough about Rowlandson to say, but I am pretty sure that Smollett, for all his obsession with the bladder and the backside, was not a brutal nor a filthy man. I feel as certain about that as I do about Swift. There is enough proof of Smollett's intention in the reforms which followed his descriptions of the brutalities of naval life at his time, in *Roderick Random*. And though there is a good deal of horseplay, battery and assault in his books, from the comic case of Hawser Trunnion picking up a turkey from the table to beat an unwelcome visitor, to the scene in *Roderick Random* where the hero and a friend tie up the schoolmaster and flog his naked backside with a rope, Smollett had strong views on the stupefying effects of flogging. These are clearly stated in *Peregrine Pickle*. It is true that Perry, after a period of beating, himself becomes the bully of the school, to Hawser Trunnion's great delight, but Trunnion's views are always presented as further fantastic examples of a fantastic and maimed character. We see more of what Smollett was like in the portrait of Dr. Bramble in *Humphry Clinker*. Generosity and goodness of heart go together with an impetuous temper and a good touch of hypochondria. He has a morbid nose which smells out every stench that Bath, Edinburgh and Harrogate can provide; and Smollett's own nose, in his book of travels in France and Italy, was as fastidious. Smollett, one is forced to conclude, had a skin too few. His coarseness, like that of Joyce, is the coarseness of one whose senses were unprotected and whose nerves were exposed. Something is arrested in the growth of his robust mind; as a novelist he remains the portrayer of the outside, rarely able to get away from physical externals or to develop from that starting-point into anything but physical caricature.

A course of Smollett is hard for the modern reader to digest. The theatre advised and animated Fielding and gave him form and discipline. Smollett might have remained a ship's surgeon—and would probably have been a happier man. (Smollett figures in Disraeli's gallery of literary calamities.) The difficulty of digestion is that he is raw and piquant meat; course follows course without abating, and one has a surfeit. One begins *Peregrine Pickle*, *Roderick Random*, *Humphry Clinker* or *Count Fathom* exclaiming with pleasure at the physical zest and the racing speed of the narrative, but after a hundred and fifty pages, one has had enough of the practical jokes, the heiresses and duellists, the cheats and the bawds. The trouble is that the English novel changed direction after its early lessons with the French and Spanish picaresque writers. The novel of travel gave place to plot and developed character. The kind of thing which Smollett did in *Humphry Clinker*—which all the critics, except the unerring Hazlitt, over-praise—was turned into Young's Tours or Cobbett's Rural Rides. But half the difficulty which the modern reader finds is due to our increased pace of reading. Proust is tedious—Proust who learned from the English eighteenth century—until one's eye gets the right pace; and if one can slow down one's eye to the Augustan movement, the pleasure one gets out of a writer like Smollett lasts a long time. Those long sentences were part of the reform of manners. How much more brutalising are modern novels on physical themes in the staccato or plain style.

One book of Smollett's can be recommended to the modern reader without reservations: the very original *Travels Through France and Italy*, the first ill-tempered, captious, disillusioned and vigorously personal travel book in modern literature. It is a tale of bad inns, illness, cheating customs officials, a thoroughly British book of grousings and manias—the aim of every Frenchman is to seduce your wife, or if not your wife, your sister, and if not your sister, your daughter, as a token of his esteem for you!—but packed with the irritable author and with moments of fresh, unperturbed judgments. It annoyed Sterne and was meant to annoy him. Against Sterne's fancies stand Smollett's manias, and how well they stand. Elsewhere, in the novels, one thinks less of whole books than of scenes. *Peregrine Pickle* is not as vigorous in its strokes and movements as *Roderick Random*, but my favourite scenes come from the former book. Hawser Trunnion and his "Garrison" are wonderful fantasies, which tumble upon the reader uproariously as if a party were going on upstairs and the ceiling had given way in the middle of it. Trunnion lying about his naval engagements, fooled by publicans, entrapped by women, and tacking across country to his wedding, is, as they say, a beauty and no mistake. And his death—it is one of the great scenes of English literature, to be compared with that great death scene at the end of Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*. You can see, as you read, how Fielding's wittier and more brilliant imagination would have improved this novel; though Smollett surpasses Fielding, I think, in female portraiture; his leading ladies have more spirit than Fielding's and can amuse themselves quite well without the help of the hero. *Roderick Random* is altogether more sardonic and violent; *Count Fathom* is more polished, an essay after the manner of Jonathan Wild. It contains two scenes which stand out—a robber scene, suggested I suppose, by an early episode in *Gil Blas*, and an appalling chapter describing the Count's mother, who was a camp follower in Marlborough's wars and made a good living by cutting the throats of the wounded and robbing them. This is the kind of scene which reveals the exposed nerve in Smollett.

The physical realism of Smollett and his chamber-pot humour are one other link with Joyce and shows how his mind may have had not dissimilar obsessions. Perhaps that is going rather far; but there is some hint of *Anna Livia* in the Welsh maid's letters in *Humphry Clinker*. Smollett extended the farce of punning and misspelling into new regions for his times:

> Last Sunday in the parish crutch, if my own ars may be trusted, the clerk called the banes of marridge betwist Opaniah Lashmeheygo and Tapitha Bramble, spinster; he mought as well have called her inkle weaver, for she never spun a hank of yarn in her life. Young Squire Dollison and Miss Liddy make the second kipple and there might have been a turd, but times are changed for Mr. Clinker.

Or:

> Who would have thought that mistriss, after all the pains taken for the good of her prusias sole, would go for to throw away her poor body? that she would cast the heys of infection upon such a carrying crow as Lashmyhago, as old as Mathewsullin, as dry as a red herring, and as poor as a starved veezel . . . He's a profane scuffle, and as Mr. Clinker says, no better than an imp-fiddle, continually playing upon the pyebill and the new burth.

That's going farther than any Malaprop could go. It is more than the rollicking *double entendre* of Rowlandson's letterpress. It is a Scotsman making a Welsh woman play ducks and drakes with the English language. It is imaginative, festive and, like all Smollett's comedy, broad, inventive and bold in its stroke.

V. S. PRITCHETT

SOUTH SLAV INVENTORY

Black Lamb and Grey Falcon. By REBECCA WEST. *Macmillan*, 2 vols. 42*s*.

The writer and her husband, Mr. H. Andrewes, toured Yugoslavia. They journeyed down the Adriatic shore, across Bosnia by Sarajevo to Belgrade, South to Macedonia, and back to the coast by Montenegro. Miss West uses that itinerary as a frame, as the sliding frame of a train-window, to exhibit with apparent inconsequence and terrific virtuosity a series of views. Her general method is this: The travellers arrive at a stopping-place, and are shown the sights by Constantine, the enthusiastic bear-leader detailed by the Serbian Government as guide, interpreter and inspiration for such eminent travellers. Miss West then dives from the present scene into its history; thus Split evokes a fairly detailed account of the Roman Empire in Diocletian's time, and Sarajevo a very detailed description of the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, a detective novel in itself, and an excellent one, despite its fateful reality. Murders, it may be here remarked, play a considerable part in the book; the assassination of King Alexander, which Miss West adduces as her

reason for revisiting Yugoslavia: the killing of King Alexander Obrenovitch and Queen Draga; the judicial murder of "Apis" and the other officers in 1917, besides frequent homicides in the excursions into earlier history. These excursions are not plain narrative; they are elaborated into trains of thought, political, religious or metaphysical, linking them with present conditions. And so the day of sight and insight closes, as a rule in a hotel bedroom, with Mr. Andrewes summing up the meaning of it all in a few sentences of wisdom.

It will be seen that this scheme allows the writer to put in anything she chooses; and she does put in practically everything; scenery, architecture, character-sketch, history, theology, politics, sentiment—a mass of material controlled and shaped by the flow of rich and vigorous writing. It runs like a river in spate; it gushes and bubbles and eddies in circles; it gathers itself in a gliding mass to pour over the lip of a fall into crashing violence. It seems never-ending; and, indeed, it would recall Tennyson's *Brook* were it not that its volume renders it much more like that delightful Chinese picture, *A Thousand Miles of the Yangtsekiang*. Anyone who has ever sucked a pencil must admire and envy that lavish brilliance, and it is with diffidence that I suggest that abundance sometimes turns to over-writing. General Marmont, we learn with interest at Shushak, was an able administrator of Napoleon's short-lived Illyrian State, and got no thanks from his peevish master. But when he turns up again at a belvedere at Trogir, we are wearied by another account of his rule. Similarly a piece of ordinary Balkan cock-a-doodling by Constantine about an inn chambermaid is mildly funny the first time of telling; the second it is boring, and the third sickening, a little.

Yet, when she chooses, Miss West can convey an effect as economically as any purist could wish. Her conversations, especially when they are quarrels, are superb. In Dalmatia, a café discussion of Serbian government:

> Mr. A.: "There are ever so many people in Belgrade who have made fortunes, huge fortunes, by peculation. And that's the only activity in which they ever show any efficiency. For the incredible muddle of the administration is beyond belief." "It is worse than it was under the Austrians?" asked my husband. They looked at him in astonishment. "Not at all," said Mr. A., "the Austrians were not inefficient at all. They were assassins. Look what they did with the railways!" They all broke into cries of anger and disgust. "Why, think of it," said Mr. X, "the railway stopped outside Split, so as to make sure we should be nothing of a port." "And we could not go to Austria except through Budapesth," said Mrs. X. "That was the Hungarian influence, of course," said Mr. A. "But Austria permitted it," said Mr. X. "Permitted it?" cried Mrs. A, the Czech; "tell me when those who speak German have not rejoiced in humiliating the Slavs. And there are people in your country," she said to us, "who are sorry for the German-speaking minorities in Czechoslovakia. There are beings so charitable that they would get up funds to provide feeding-bottles for baby alligators."

There you are; 1937 South-East Europe in a nutshell.

Miss West's most pleasurable gift, for me, lies in her evocation of scenery. She is not clear-cut enough to describe buildings well: to anyone unacquainted with Byzantine churches, her description of Grachanitsa, for instance, would convey little, and he must fall back upon the illustration. But she can conjure up the light and scent and ambience of a place. This scene from a hotel window may seem vivid to me because I have often watched its like:

> The square was white-washed with moonlight; the dark shadows took the nineteenth-century Venetian Gothic architecture, and by obscuring the detail and emphasising the general design made it early, authentic, exquisite. On the quay ships slept, as alone among inanimate objects ships can sleep; their lights were dim and dreaming. Between the flaked trunk of a palm tree and the wild-haired shadow of its leaves stood three men of the quick and whippy and secret kind, descendants of those who had lived through the angry centuries the lives of rats and mice in the walls of Diocletian's palace.

But a sketch of Kossovo, a country unfamiliar to me, dwells as clear in imagination:

> It is the character of the skies that overarch plains to be not only wider than is common, but higher; and here one cloudy continent rode above another under a vault visible yet of no colour except space. Here light lived. Its rays, brassy because it was nearly the summer, mild because it had been a bad spring, travelled slowly, high and low, discovering terraces of snow beyond the cradling hills on peaks of unseen mountains, the white blocks of a new settlement in a fold of falling fields, and the passage over downlands of a flock of sheep, cream-coloured and nigger brown and as slow as stupidity.

Running through the whole work are three ideas. They are introduced with a random air, are repeated, deepen, accumulate, merge and end as a complex master-theme. The first is hatred of Austria. The only qualities attributed to that nation are brutality and *schlamperei*. Nazism needed no reinforcement from Prussia; like Hitler it is an Austrian manifestation. The former Austrian provinces of Yugoslavia offer material to the writer's detestation in relics of misrule. When she reaches Old Serbia she moulds an image into which to drive pins; and I am not surprised that her spells destroyed Austria before she finished the book; for undoubtedly it was they which caused the Anschluss. Gerda, the German wife of Constantine, is this appalling and comic effigy. She blasts the car-tour in Macedonia. Looking at the gypsies of Skoplje she says:

> "I do not understand you, you go on saying what a beautiful country this is, and you must know perfectly that there is no order here, no culture, but only a mish-mash of different peoples who are all quite primitive and low. Why do you do that? They should all be driven out."

They meet a poor old man. She stops him and points at his rags and laughs:

> "If a great producer like Reinhardt had tried to invent a figure of misery, he could not have thought of anything so dreadful."

But when she has finished with Gerda and Austria, Miss West has quantities of hatred left over for Hungary and Rumania and Bulgaria and Turkey and Italy and medieval Byzantium under Cantacuzenus and, in fact, for all Serbia's neighbours and enemies past and present. This hostility is the reverse of the second motif, a great love for the people of Serbia. That is, the people of old Serbia and Macedonia, for she treats the Croats as factious, the Bosnians as picturesque, the Montenegrins as beautiful but dull—one surmises they felt no urge to expand to visitors accompanied by a Belgrade official. Rebecca West has fallen in love with the Serbs *en masse*, and nothing is easier, for they would wile a bird from a bough. She explains their qualities endlessly; and they are all true, most of all their depth of speculative intelligence and the fortitude which preserved their character through centuries of defeat and subjection. She is far too clever and too honest to accept nationalist propaganda wholesale, and she makes a careful study of Serbian history between the wars. But passion does not see the beloved with detachment; and she condones, in Serbians, policies she condemns in others. Thus the political activity of the Serbian Church goes uncriticised, because she is stirred by its remote incantatory liturgy; she skips lightly over the eviction of Albanians and Bulgarophones, which contributed even more than Mussolini's bombs to Macedonian banditry; she evades also the problem of where the majority loyalty of Macedonia lies. She recognises the really remarkable folly of King Alexander's personal régime, but because of his devotion to duty she

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judges it gently. Yet while it is very well to be a dedicated "priest-king," an autocrat may successfully be either ruthless or stupid, but not both; and Alexander's tragedy lay in his decision to impose a misguided policy upon a highly political people by violence, and by so doing to invite his own violent end.

The third motif of Rebecca West's book is a love of life; she adores in the Serbs their vitality, in the nation the will to live and survive. This theme is developed by a serial argument, kindled by an altar of Mithras, carved with the bull-slaying, by the sacrifice of the Black Lamb of the title in a Macedonian fertility-rite; by St. Augustine, Luther, and the Grey Falcon who induced Tsar Lazar, in the folk-song, to refuse victory and to choose the destruction of his army and holiness at the stricken field of Kossovo. Against the human tendency to accept defeat and death for the man or for the nation, in the belief that sacrifice expiates sin, Rebecca West is in revolt. The Serbs, she holds, and all of us, must fight and struggle not only against the foe without, but the dark love of annihilation within the soul. This controversy with the doctine of atonement leaves the enthralled reader, at the end of an immense book, asking for yet more. "Live!" says the writer; but a further question awaits her eager mind for which neither love of our own countrymen, nor hatred of others supplies the answer. How are the peoples to live and let live?

FREDA WHITE

SEAN O'CASEY

Pictures in the Hallway. By SEAN O'CASEY. *Macmillan.* 15*s.*

This is the second volume of Mr. Sean O'Casey's autobiography; the first, *I Knock at the Door*, was published in the summer of 1939. So far as events go, this new volume covers roughly the author's years between twelve and eighteen. Parnell's funeral in the first chapter and the defeat of the Orangemen in the last enable us to fix the dates 1891–9; but that is not the sort of precision to apply, except out of curiosity.

Few facts, in the ordinary narrative sense, emerge. Johnny O'Casside (the book is written throughout in the third person) lives in a mean Dublin street; father dead, mother and an older son at home. He begins by earning five shillings a week as clerk and packer in a store, and this rises to six. His next job, with Harmsworth's, magazine distributors, brings him 7*s.* 6*d.* He pilfers a little to help a friend. There is talk about Parnell; Protestant talk. One brother almost dies of consumption, the other is away in the British army. Johnny tilts a policeman off his horse during the pro-Boer riots. He reads Shakespeare. He plays his first part on a stage, and spends his first night with a girl. Learns Irish, escapes the God of his children, touches the fringes of the Gaelic League and of Socialism. What else? Dublin with its grey huddle and jingling trams, many-coloured troops, the Liffey, and Nelson's monument. A visit to Kilmainham jail, a hawthorn in blossom, ugly poverty, habits of reverie, rebellion.

I could add to the list without bringing the reader much nearer to O'Casey; for events in his book are important only as they set light to imagination. The young O'Casside had weak eyes and a blazing imagination. Looking back Mr. O'Casey uses the material of his life, as De Quincey did, to weave tunes; or should I say to make pictures?

> He was back in the dimly-dead warehouse . . .
> —— You didn't eat much breakfast, [his mother] had said anxiously.
> —— I'm too tired to eat, he had answered.
> —— You look it, she had answered, with a slight sigh. If the job's goin' to hurt you like this, you'd betther give it up—we'll manage somehow.
>
> She looked out of the window, watching the snow coming down, softly, so softly, like a week-old mother crooning to her week-old baby; so gently, and yet making work harder than it ought to be. You want a top-coat badly, she had said, turning to Johnny again, when he was about to go; don't try to rush; take everything quietly and with caution; and if, in the end, it proves too much, we'll have to look out for something else. Jason's isn't the only place God made.
>
> Here he was back in the dim dead-house again, parcelling papers and magazines; pasting labels; tying string endlessly; in the midst of floating dust, dim light, the passing to and fro of heavy, tired, flagging footsteps, and the murmur of voices, saying nothing. The smell of snowy slush, mixed with the smell of damp leather, filled his nostrils, while the steam from human breath formed a heavy haze round the jaded light that the gas gave. Dusky figures, like sagging designs formed by apprentice potters, moved about, topped by motionless faces, moving in the wet of gloom, slandering life in silence; while overhead the shadowy clerks crouched in the glassy boxes, like dingy crabs in a dusty aquarium. And all this dead movement and dying murmur went on in the breathy mist and dusky glimmer, before the fluttering white curtains of the falling snow, filling the wide entrance with its lacy flickering strands, dodging here and there as if in play with each other, but ever, at last falling to weave a thicker covering for the footway and the road.

This is rather a long quotation for a review, but a writer has his unit, which one should respect. Everything in the 345 pages of *Pictures in the Hallway*—from the policeman with "ruby face, jowled like two Dutch cheeses" to the whole of that staggering chapter "I Strike a Blow for Thee, Dear Land," which describes an evening of demonstrations and street clashes—is seen, heard, felt and written with intensity: an intensity of passion or bitterness rising at moments to ecstacy.

There are sides to O'Casey's prose which I can't pretend to care for. After the Bible, Synge and Joyce have been his masters; the rhetoric of the former, the latter's word-jingles and parody, inspire excesses; and some pages joining the homespun and the experimental seem to me unfortunate. But what a prose it is! Splendour of diction is so rare to-day that we have almost lost our appetite for it, the capacity to take the rough with the smooth of eloquence. No wonder Shakespeare and Milton, Bunyan, Ruskin, and Carlyle's *French Revolution*, were among O'Casey's early books; and he comes of a race in which imagination is peculiarly linked with a gift of the gab. Patriot, rebel for mankind, visionary, writer of genius—here we are shown the four-fold strain in adolescence. I believe that with *I Knock at the Door* and *Pictures in the Hallway* O'Casey may be writing one of the great autobiographies of our time, though much, of course, will depend on the volumes of maturity to follow. Now and then, reading the present volume, I felt that tiny incidents were being too much enhanced, that too potent a spell had cast an early squalor. But then I have a predilection for the sharp fact and the lyrical short-cut. What is certain is that in these "pictures" of his (they are pictures rather than chapters) O'Casey has discovered his own autobiographical form, and that he can use it superbly.

G. W. STONIER

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exclusion of all but official poets from the City. It is the injunction to tell the poet

> that there is no such person with us in our city, nor is there any such allowed to be, and we should send him out to some other city, pouring oil on his head and crowning him with wool; but we use a more austere poet and mythologist for our advantage.

that forms the occasion of Mr. Church's spirited, wise and (though he ought not to spell "perfectibility" with an "a"—he does it twice, so he must mean it) extremely well-written essay. It is an apprehensive essay; justly so in the light of the contemporary Totalitarian scene. But it is not merely on the Continent that poets are being *gleichgeschaltet*. While the Nazi poets are bidden to sing odes of adoration to Hitler, ours are in danger of being enrolled as superior advertising agents to extol the virtues of mateyness and heartiness as propagated by the B.B.C. and the M.O.I. Mr. Church fears lest the governmental incorporation of poets should extend into the Brave New World that, if all goes well, awaits us after the war, and sees the poet

> given the chance of celebrating the new bucolic life brought up to date by the combined efforts of the Ministries of Agriculture and Labour. In the new countryside possibly there will be no "primrose by the river's brim," no "darkling thrush," no "Ruth standing amid the alien corn," because such elements would not conduce to the fullest economic working of the soil. The poet will possibly be told that he must sing a song of phosphates; he will be required to lay down odes on land drainage, or write a sonnet series *re* afforestation.

The essay ends with a melancholy interview between Shelley and an Employment Exchange official who puts Shelley through a cross-examination as to the precise meaning of his poems, preparatory to signing the chit for the monthly dole which a benevolent State is prepared to extend to those whose verses comply with official requirements. For it must be remembered that, in the Brave New World of the future, Shelley will have no private income and, being unable to make a living by selling his poems, will have to conform to the official regulations prescribing the nature of poetry if he is to qualify for the State dole paid to the unemployed members of his profession.

The picture is an alarming one, and not only because of its implied pessimism in regard to the prospects of poetry. For the melancholy record of the Poets Laureate is not necessary to assure us that a Pegasus who flies to order, flies with clipped wings. If liberty is the air, the arts are the flowers of the spirit, and, like flowers, they can bloom only in a favouring environment which permits the spirit to blow where it listeth. It is no doubt unfortunate that they cannot be made to bloom by Act of Parliament; unfortunate, but none the less true, true no doubt to the point of triteness. But there is more behind. Apart altogether from the quality of their poetry, it is good that there should be poets, precisely because they do *not* fit into the officially prescribed mould. The point has been admirably made in an article contributed by E. M. Forster to the December number of *Horizon*. In a disintegrating society the man who remains as far as possible detached from the mess the politicians and the masses have made, "the Bohemian, the outsider, the parasite, the rat," assumes, as he rightly points out, a new significance.

Mr. Church, looking not to disintegration, but to a brave new synthesis, makes the same point. Of course poets are a nuisance to society, but their nuisance is a measure of their value.

> Their eccentricity is one of exploration, and in flying from the centre of the State community they fly towards a wider circumference, toward which that community can extend its moral and political consciousness.

Hence

> their particular form of insanity must remain unfettered because it is a sublimation and not a degradation of the normal, sane outlook on life.

No doubt. But why is all this represented as Plato's mistake? Plato admittedly turned the poets out of his city, but he did so because he feared the masses and knew how the poets, whose modern equivalents are the advertisers, the publicists and the propagandists, debauch them. Mr. Church yields nothing to Plato in fear and hatred of the masses. He knows, as Plato knew, how they hate beauty,

> All the faults of the Elizabethan mob, a mob . . . still refined to some extent by the traditions of religion and handicraft and even of a useful superstition, have been magnified to the point of horror in the mob to-day. It is a city-bred mob that knows no approach to nature except one of bewilderment and destruction.

Possibly, possibly not! But, assuming that Mr. Church is right, has he any assurance that the poet would fare better in an unregulated Brave New World than in a planned one? Wouldn't Mr. Church's mob lynch him if they recognised him, and leave him to starve to death in a garret in the usual way, if they didn't? And may it not be better that some official cognisance should be taken of poets even at the price of a certain amount of form-filling? Plato no doubt pushed his thesis to uncomfortable lengths in its application to poets, but Mr. Church does less than justice to the thesis while endorsing many of the presuppositions upon which it is based. What are these?

In the delightful introduction which he has contributed to a new edition of Plato's *Republic* Dr. Cornford emphasises two of Plato's points which have a bearing upon Mr. Church's *Mistake*. First, the true end of statesmanship is the production of the excellence, not of the individual, but of that essentially social character, the citizen. Secondly, this can only be achieved if you place the government in the hands of men "who understand that you cannot make either an individual or a society happy by making them richer or more powerful than their neighbours." In other words, philosophers must be kings. Now is it quite clear to Mr. Church that the Shelleys of the future will fare worse at the hands of the philosophers than at those of the masses and of the business men, or even of the M.O.I. and the B.B.C.?

C. E. M. JOAD

DETECTION

Knife in the Dark. By G. D. H. & M. COLE. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Chuckling Fingers. By MABEL SEELEY. *Collins.* 8*s.*

Death and the Dancing Footman. By NGAIO MARSH. *Collins.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

No Murder. By H. C. BAILEY. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Losing Game. By FREEMAN WILLS CROFTS. *Hodder & Stoughton.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Home Guard Mystery. By BELTON COBB. *Longmans, Green.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Secret Weapon. By BERNARD NEWMAN. *Gollancz.* 8*s.*

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war has imposed on the surviving scholastic aborigines a welter of evacuees, Air Force cadets and polyglot refugees from Nazidom. In this uneasy city Mrs. Lake, an attractive but emotionally rattled don's wife, decides to distract herself and enliven the autumn term by giving a dance for the undergraduates. The dance is voted a great success, except for Mrs. Lake, who gets a knife between her shoulder-blades, when she least expects it, in a dark corner. The range of suspects includes those who loved Kitty Lake, the Air Force and the undergraduates, and those who hated her, the refugees. Fortunately for the sake of justice Mrs. Warrender of *Mrs. Warrender's Profession*, attended the ball and was able to put everyone to rights. I enjoyed *Knife in the Dark* more than any book the Coles have yet written.

The Chuckling Fingers are an improbable rock-formation on the shores of Lake Superior, round which the water gurgles strangely—just the sort of place for Mrs. Eberhart to murder a few people, only Miss Seeley has got there first. The Heatons are the lumber kings of the neighbourhood with a summer residence at the Fingers, but someone seems bent on eliminating them. One after another they die, while the Fingers chuckle and the Sheriff hunts the gun in vain. The Heaton family tree on the frontispiece defines the limits of suspicion, but even so the villain is extremely well muffled. Miss Seeley showed in *The Whispering Cup* and *The Crying Sisters* what she can do with an hysterical heroine in the foreground and a killer breathing down the back of her neck; and *The Chuckling Fingers* is a splendid continuation of this Eberhart tradition.

The blemish in all Miss Marsh's work is her tendency to fall in love with her own characters. She becomes too fond of them to do them justice; and the sharp profiles that promise so well become blurred out of recognition by sentimental touching-up. Fortunately, in *Death and the Dancing Footman* we only get half-a-dozen pages of Inspector Alleyn's domestic bliss with Agatha Troy, and only have to admire one of that deplorable lady's Academy portraits, but Miss Marsh compensates herself by mothering several otherwise respectable people. The Dancing Footman himself escapes as he only has to do a couple of steps of the Boomps-a-Daisy to provide someone with a crucial alibi, but a modern poet and an Austrian refugee doctor, both admirably conceived, go to the bad under Miss Marsh's over-sympathetic touch. The scene is the usual English country-house party cut off by snow; the guests have been specially selected by a malicious host because they all hate each other; the weapon is one of those Maori daggers which appear to hang on every wall in England ready for murderers to come along (Mrs. Lake got hers in *Knife in the Dark*); the technique of the murder, if I am not mistaken, has been used before; and the criminal is pretty obvious. But I don't wish to imply that *Death and the Dancing Footman* is anything but an extremely well-written book and a pleasure to read. If only Miss Ngaio Marsh would take herself in hand, she could reel off masterpieces of detection.

Reggie Fortune on the long, long trail of a full-length novel always gets puffed. His legs are too short; his mode of thought too elliptic and his manner too brusque to carry him easily over those great open pages. In *No Murder* he requires three post-mortems and a couple of savage assaults to stay the course. Why so much bloodshed tots up to no murder in the end I leave the reader to discover for himself; but the explanation is quite sound, and one of the deaths shows considerable ingenuity on Mr. Bailey's part to invent and Reggie's to elucidate. Mereshire county society, where the action takes place, is easy game for Reggie's devastating repartee; a spaniel, a clean, girlish doctor's daughter and an untidy undergraduate provide the adolescent appeal to his softer side; while Mr. Bailey unearths some wonderful claret for him at the local pub. But even so Reggie yearns to be back at this stable, and taken over shorter gallops.

How different a performer is Inspector French! He couldn't gallop if he tried. But no distance is too long for his jog trot, no detail too wearisome for his laborious investigation. *The Losing Game* is played against the Inspector by the murderer of a blackmailer in a snug little cottage up the Thames. The wrong man is arrested by the local police, giving old French a chance to show all his patient tact and devotion to justice. But the plot is dull, even for a Wills Crofts, with the killer revealed from the very beginning to a discerning eye. Dull as a ditch—but sound as a bell!

Nor is Mr. Cobb one of our liveliest authors. The killer in *Home Guard Mystery* has the oddest motive that I have ever read of, assigned to a sane murderer. Apart from that the story is humdrum enough. An unpopular sergeant of the Home Guard in a Metroland village disappears in a wood during an air raid. Home Guard manœuvres and jargon are supposed to provide some amusement, with doubtful success.

Secret Weapon is Everyman's daydream, the bomb that is to blow the Nazis to smithereens, and how we should apply it. Mr. Newman works it out very carefully in time and place, but most old gentlemen dozing in the corners of railway carriages on the way home from the office prefer doing it their own way. Personally, I abandoned super-bombs in 1940 and have since been doing yeoman work with an electro-magnetic U-boat buster. RALPH PARTRIDGE

LIBERAL MEMORIES

Years of Endeavour. By SIR GEORGE LEVESON-GOWER. *John Murray.* 15s.

Born in 1858, the great-grandson of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, the nephew of Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary, Sir George Leveson-Gower, in a preceding volume entitled *Years of Content*, provided a delightful and instructive picture of the world in which he grew up and of his experiences as private secretary to Mr. Gladstone in the early 'eighties. His new book, which covers his life from 1886 to 1907, though less absorbing, can be recommended to everyone interested in the social and political life of the period. In the Nineties Sir George was Liberal whip and then Comptroller of the Household, after which he became the European representative of the *North American Review*. Cultoristed, humane, genial and cynical, he is a most sympathetic representative of the Liberal aristocracy. To-day such a man would be little tempted to politics, in either a Tory party controlled by the mercantile interest or a Labour party dominated by aged Trade Unionists. The historian is likely to decide that in the calamitous decade before the war the liberal-minded aristocrats, driven by circumstances into a Conservative party that disregarded them, showed much the clearest understanding of their country's situation.

As a young man, Sir George was fortunate in his friends: such men as Harry Cust, Rennell Rodd, George Curzon, J. V. Mackail, comprised a society that was dashing without being frivolous. A letter written by Curzon in 1887 from Nagasaki deserves quotation:

> Life for you is utterly manqué until you come here. The Javanese maidens are not in it with the Japanese. Come, see, and be conquered. For over three weeks I have sojourned in these delightful surroundings, charmed by scenery alternatively picturesque and grand and solaced by the attention of exquisite maidens, piquante, polite, irresistible.

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Registered under the War Charities Act 1940.

Another letter, fifteen years later, from Curzon, then Viceroy, includes this sentence: "As I left a Native State the other day a triumphal arch at the station bore the inscription 'Goodbye to our Lord.' Finally, after his defeat by Kitchener, he writes from Simla about "the setting up of a military autocracy in the person of an obstinate soldier who has no following and little prestige in this country."

A large part of the book is taken from letters written by Lady Wenlock, when her husband was Governor of Madras. A photograph of this lady is; to me, one of the chief charms of the book, for I have never seen a lovelier face. From a galaxy of anecdotes let me select a few vignettes: Archbishop Temple shocking Lord Stanhope by declaring "there is a certain class of clergyman whose mendacity is only equalled by their mendicity"; a Kentish hop-grower, when asked by a keen Prohibitionist whether it was the competition from German hops that most troubled him, answering, "It ain't so much the Germans, it's them Sussex wops as I complains of"; and Harry Cust, when the Nationalists in the House waved their arms in protest at a suggestion of Northern Ireland being excluded from Home Rule, whispering "Tendebantque manus ripae *ulterioris* amore"; King Edward VII inventing the dinner-jacket at Hamburg; Mr. Gladstone singing "Dinah Do" and eating too many gooseberries in a kitchen-garden; George Meredith choosing every word as he talked, and by preference the least obvious one; Mr. Balfour at a dinner party attended by several Liberals, including Mr. Churchill, asking F. E. Smith to coach him in the Education Bill and not concealing his complete ignorance of the subject. Sir George observes, touching this last incident, that in no other country would a Prime Minister trust his opponents not to make capital of such a confidence. The success, one may add, of the parliamentary system in the past has depended partly on such good feeling. Yet already, in 1900, Sir George found himself boycotted for his Home Rule opinions by some of his relations in his Staffordshire constituency. It is of some historical interest, also, that in 1889 he had to give up his intention of standing for Leicester because he was not opposed to vaccination. Let me end with one last story from this admirable Liberal: "I was strongly opposed to the Boer War, which I regarded as ill-advised, unnecessary and unjust; and when a Paris *gamin* called out after me 'Conspruz Chamberlain!' I had no hesitation in answering '*De tout mon coeur.*'" Witty and cultivated, with a gentle cynicism that impaired neither his political convictions nor his practical kindness, Sir George reveals an intensely sympathetic character, and I can recommend his book. RAYMOND MORTIMER

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

CHOPIN: *Mazurkas, Vol. II.* Arthur Rubinstein. (H.M.V. DB3839-45.)

BEETHOVEN: *String Quartet in F, op. 59, No. 1.* Philharmonia Quartet. (Col. DX8173-7.)

KABALEVSKY: *Sonatina in C*, and

SZOSTAKOVICZ: *Prelude, op. 34, No. 14.* Harriet Cohen (Col. DX1066).

MOUSSORGSKY-STOKOWSKI: *Pictures at an Exhibition.* Philadelphia Orch., cond. Stokowski (H.M.V. DB8914-7).

TCHAIKOVSKY: "1812" *Overture.* Cleveland Orch., cond. Rodzinski (Col. LX932-3).

MOZART: *Serenade in G (K 525).* Leslie Howard String Orch. (Col. DX1063-4).

DELIUS: *Hassan—Intermezzo and Serenade*, and

DELIUS: *Koanga—La Calinda.* Hallé Orch., cond. Constant Lambert (H.M.V. C3273).

ROSSINI: *La Gazza Ladra—Overture.* Boston Promenade Orch., cond. Fiedler (H.M.V. C3271).

MARTINI: *Plaisir d'Amour*, and

FAURE: *Dans les Ruines d'une Abbaye.* Maggie Teyte, acc. Gerald Moore (H.M.V. DA1810).

An exceptionally lean month, compensated for by the second and final instalment of Chopin's Mazurkas played as we need never expect to hear them played again in our lifetime. Some of the best are assembled here, from short lyrics such as op. 59, Nos. 1 and 2; op. 50, No. 1 (incidentally an example of true rubato playing); op. 68, No. 1, to the big "symphonic" Mazurkas, which include op. 63, No. 3; op. 59, No. 3, and (*pace* Mr. Alec. Robertson, whose note indicates that he does not care for it) op. 56, No. 3, in which an inadmissible cut has been made.

At this moment, when the concepts of refinement and quality are being deliberately blasted out of our stricken world, Chopin's Mazurkas come as an all but unbearably poignant reminder of how distinguished human nature, in all its complexity, can be, when passionate feeling is expressed by a taste that always stops short of the emphatic. These pieces, like the mature keyboard music of Bach, which they intrinsically resemble, belong to the higher reaches of musical aristocracy. If they show an occasional weakening of inspiration—a disposition to "make do"—as in the middle section of op. 68, No. 2, the subtlety of modulation and key combination, the contrapuntal ingenuity, the way in which one theme seems to bud out of another, place these Mazurkas among the highest achievements of nineteenth-century musical sensibility. The mastery of style shown by Rubinstein lies in the rhythmical flexibility and control with which he informs all the parts; in the cleverness with which he contrives to vary the tone-colour within a sequence of, say, eight identical phrases (a characteristic feature of these pieces); in his ability to make the music seem to fade into the distance, instead of merely becoming softer; and, finally, in the superb taste which gives the gayer numbers (especially the famous op. 59, No. 3) all the *élan* they need, but never for an instant permits them a loutish bounce. This is an inimitable set, and even if you have made a resolution to buy no more records till the war is over, brave the wrath to come and make an exception in favour of these.

It seems churlish to turn up one's nose at as good a performance as the Philharmonia Quartet put up, but the fact is that where works like the Rasoumovsky Quartets are concerned, no performance that lacks that ultimate but indefinable air of authority can be reckoned wholly satisfactory. There are no errors of interpretation here, but the playing in the Scherzo is a bit ragged and the recording thin and shrill. Though it is a little more expensive, the Budapest Quartet issue remains preferable to this.

The Kabalevsky Sonatina is as easy on the ear as Poulenc in his most ingratiating mood; but though most limpidly written, this music is disheartenningly shallow, and I cannot believe that it would grow on one. Miss Cohen does all her possible for it, as well as for the pretentiously solemn Szostakovicz Prelude on side 4.

Of the three orchestral versions of Moussorgsky's *Pictures* (Ravel, Henry Wood, Stokowski), I consider that the second is the least objectionable. The new one is certainly the most arresting of the three, but has a theatrical quality reminiscent of Respighi's tone-poems. I often wonder how popular this suite really is—apart from conductors' passion for orchestrating it. As a companion piece to Schumann's *Carnaval* it is surely very unsatisfactory, for in spite of the linking material it is not an organic whole, and only a few of the pictures (notably "The Old Castle") have original, *musical* interest: the rest are mere coloured postcards. The recording of this issue is only fairly acceptable; it has the spurious, all-overish glitter of a sound-track, which, of course, it is not.

If anything could make me like the "1812"

Today's Bright Thought

You may have as much

HOVIS

as you like

CUT DON'T WASTE

East Bakers Bake it Macclesfield

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Overture it would not be the latest recording, which is as violent as it is shallow. The prolonged tutti are quite insupportable. One sees why the set was issued at this particular moment, but it is hard to believe that even those who find the music encouraging will care to hear it recorded like this.

If anything could make me *dis*like the *Kleine Nachtmusik*, hackneyed though it is, it would be a set like this, in which a rather wooden performance, with much too heavy a bass, is aggravated by a ringing echo. I believe a body of strings to be, for the purposes of this work, preferable to a quartet of soloists; but we already have the admirable Telefunken set, so why, in heaven's name, go to the trouble and expense of foisting an inferior one upon us, in these marginless days?

All this scolding hurts me more than it hurts you, and to bring it to an end I must warn readers that, even if they retain an affection for Rossini when he is neither interesting nor pretty, they will not like the new disc of *The Thieving Magpie*. This very noisy record reminded me of a phonograph I once possessed, way back in 1908.

To return from America, the Delius issue presents a most adroit and welcome conjunction of items, beautifully played and recorded. These pieces are exquisitely charming and many who could not afford to subscribe to the Delius Society must have longed to have them together on one disc. *Heil* Lambert!

I wonder how many people know anything of the author of that simple, touching and justly popular little song, *Plaisir d'Amour?* If asked, would you hesitate and then murmur something about Lucienne Boyer, or even Léo Silésu? Perish the thought! But—just in case—I may as well remind you that Martini "il Tedesco," or Johann Paul Schwarzendorf, was organist of the Jesuit seminary at Neustadt when he was but ten years old; that he ran away from home to avoid a nasty stepmother and spent the rest of his life in Paris, with the exception of two years at Lyons, during the Revolution; that he was disliked and intrigued against by Méhul; and finally that, after composing a series of adequately successful *opéras comiques* and a cantata for the marriage of Napoleon and Marie Louise, he died in 1816, at the age of seventy-five. Nothing of his appears to have survived except *Plaisir d'Amour*, but the composer of so genuine an expression of sentiment must have had an uncommon talent. Of course, the song has that sugary, slightly phoney quality associated with all Jesuit-nourished art; and, like Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, it reminds us that the eighteenth century could sail as near the wind, on occasion, as the nineteenth. But of its effectiveness there can be no question, and Miss Teyte's is, I feel, the perfect interpretation. Simply phrased and sung quite straight, it shows off the beauty of her lower notes. The Fauré song, on the obverse, is both dull and uncharacteristic.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Week-end Competitions

No. 630

Set by Allen M. Laing

Sir William Jowett's suggestion of a firing-squad for Black Marketeers is, in the realist field, a little too drastic; but there seems to be no reason why *New Statesman* competitors should not let themselves go in devising Gilbertian punishments to fit the crime. The usual prizes are offered for the best suggestions. Limits: prose, 200 words; verse, 24 lines.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, March 9th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 627

Set by Roger Marvell

A first prize of two guineas and a second prize of half a guinea are offered for the best sonnet in dialogue between two old lovers meeting after many years.

Report by Roger Marvell

The notion of this competition came from Verlaine's beautiful and terrible *Colloque Sentimentale*:

—Te souvient-il de notre extase ancienne?
—Pourquoi voulez-vous donc qu'il m'en souvienne?..
—Ah! les beaux jours de bonheur indicible
—Où nous joignions nos bouches!—C'est possible.
—Qu'il etait bleu, le ciel, et grand, l'espoir!
—L'espoir a fui, vaincu, vers le ciel noir.

Perhaps by asking for sonnets I put too severe a strain upon competitors (though very few attempted the most rigid sonnet-form). In any case, the quality of most entries is disappointing, though the quantity is prodigious. Indeed, the competition seems to have tapped an immense reservoir of sentiment, of memory and of regret. Every style has been attempted, including the colloquial, the rustic, the Cockney and the Shakespearean. From a whole pyramid of entries some of the best are by D. D. R., Towanbucket, Vivien Bulkley, M. Bell, L. Baldwin, Sir Robert Witt, Silvia Tatham, Josepha Grace, R. S. Jaffray, D. C. R. Francombe, M. B., John Booker, John Thornton, Richard Pomfret, Dorothy Hawkins, Constance Sewell and Pibwob. F. C. C. submitted three sonnets, one of which I recommend without hesitation for the first prize. For second prize I have considered William Bliss, L. V. Upward and W. H. G. Price, as well as F. C. C., and I plump with no great confidence for W. H. G. Price.

FIRST PRIZE

A SECOND CHANCE?

"Bill, take a cushion on the ground. That's better:
Just how you used to lie ten years ago."
"Tell me one thing I have a right to know:
Why did you never answer my last letter?"
"I used to wish when I was seventeen
(You can't chew grass *and* make a noble face),
That I could find that fairy-story place
Where there is everything that might have been—
That dear dead kitten grown Eternal Cat;
The plays we meant to act in, you and I;
Even the tears there was never time to cry.
Do you think Heaven is really only that,
Not harps and haloes?" "Dear, I know it well,
And often go there; but its name is Hell."

F. C. C.

SECOND PRIZE

WM. SHAKESPEARE MEETS A DARK LADY

"Hath Time then caught thee with his soft-foot chase,
Cooled thy hot blood and nicked thy lusty youth,
Making thee one that shuns the hot embrace—
A shrunken-shank who fears Love's bitter truth?"

"Nay lass, though years conspire to slow the blood,
And summer's madness that would brook no let
Yields to flush autumn's less unmaster'd flood,
Think not my mem'ry grown fat to forget
The ringtime frolics in the country hay,
Or winter evenings when my two arms gyved
My lovely mistress in sweet wanton play."

"Think then of Death, and the quick flesh deprived
Of th' antique solace that's denied the dead—
Come Will, a token kiss and let's to bed."

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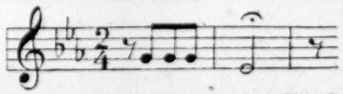
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PHILOSOPHY

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